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THE NEW EDEN





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THE NEW EDEN

BY

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AUTHOR OF

'FOUR RED NIGHTCAPS,' 'A MATRIMONIAL MIXTURE,'

ETC., ETC.

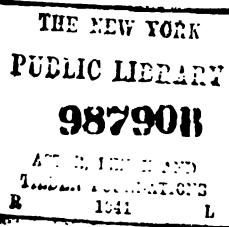


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PROLOGUE.

A TALL square-shouldered man of forty or forty-two, with a clever tired-looking face, was seated at a writing-table, looking over a portfolio of rough MS. notes. The cabin in which he sat was furnished with rich comfort, but no useless luxury. It was the abode of the savant rather than the sybarite.

The time was night, but electric lamps filled the place with a steady glow of light.

There came a knock at the door.

“Enter.”

The door-handle turned, and the yacht’s sailing-master stepped inside.

“Your highness,” he said, “we are there. I have had the engines slowed down to half speed, so as just to give us steerage way.”

“You have not run into sight of the island?”

“The loom of the mid-peak can just be seen from the foretop-gallant yard; but from land we should be invisible.”

“That is well. Call away the boat at once, and I will be on deck in ten minutes. Stay a minute.” The sailing-master had saluted, and was turning to leave the cabin. “You have explained to the officer in charge of the boat how to find that creek which we noted before? There is too much at stake here, for me to rely upon my own memory about such matters.”

“With permission, your highness, I shall accompany you myself.”

“Ah, perhaps that is the best plan.

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And you have impressed upon the men the necessity for keeping our presence absolutely hidden ? ”

“ They understand it thoroughly.”

“ Repeat your warning, captain, and promise them a heavy douceur to help their caution. If our visit is noticed, my experiment will be in great part spoiled, and my life will not be long enough to commence a second from the beginning.”

“ I will see that your highness has no reason to fear on that score.”

“ And about provisions, captain ? ”

“ According to orders, I have victualled the boat for fourteen days.”

“ Add more; make it twenty. My present intention is to spend a week on each island; but delays may occur. We may be held there by storms, and I cannot have the yacht standing in through the reefs to take us off.”

“ Your highness need have no fear of

that. The trade-winds are regular now. There is no reason to expect a storm at this time of year."

"Nevertheless," returned the other, "it is my wish to be prepared even for the unexpected."

"I will victual the boat for twenty days," said the sailing-master, and then withdrew.

The Archduke turned again to his writing-table, and collecting the papers with which it was strewn, packed them away methodically, closed the lid upon them, and locked it. Then he put on a cap and a long military coat, and went up on deck. The crew had just swung a pair of boat-davits outboard, and were standing by the tackles ready to lower at word of command.

The officer who was to be left in charge came up and saluted.

"Any further orders, your highness?"

“None but what the captain will have given you; but let me repeat them. You are to cruise away in any direction you think fit for a fortnight, and then to return here and stand on and off just out of sight from this group of islands. Meanwhile you are to speak no vessel if you can avoid it. We may be detained on the islands longer than we anticipate, and if so you must wait for us as long as your provisions hold out. But under no circumstances are you to come in and look for us. Remember that. I had rather wait a couple of years before rejoining the yacht than have her sighted by those who are inside that barrier reef.”

“Your highness shall be obeyed to the letter.”

Meanwhile the boat, a strongly-built whaler, had been lowered, and brought alongside the accommodation ladder. The Archduke went down and took his

seat in the stern-sheets beside the sailing-master, who gave the order to cast off, and soon she was leaving the steamer under the impulse of four strongly-driven oars.

In half an hour the captain blew out the lamp which was illuminating the card of the boat compass, and pointed to a small dark blot on the horizon.

“That,” he said, “is the mountain summit of the larger island. We shall rise the reef in another fifty minutes, and be through the opening and snugly moored in the old bushy creek in less than three hours.”

The Archduke nodded, but made no verbal reply, and the boat went on through the warm night, the silence being broken only by the “cheep” of the rowlocks, and the gentle splashings and ripples of the water.



Fifteen days had passed, and the outline of that central peak was again the only land which stood out against the dark horizon. This time the whale-boat was leaving it. She was standing out to sea. The Archduke was sitting in the stern as before. His eyes were fixed upon the floor-gratings. He paid no attention to what was going on around him.

From time to time the sailing-master stood up on the stern-thwart, and scanned the seaward horizon. The night hours passed away without showing him the thing he sought; but soon after dawn his scrutiny was rewarded, and sinking back to his seat, he took a glance at the compass, and bade the four oarsmen "give way."

"We shall be on board under the hour, with luck, your highness," he observed.

A nod was the only reply, and the sailing-master did not venture to intrude upon his employer's reverie until the yacht had them all once more on board, and the whale-boat had been run up to davits. Then, with some hesitation, he stepped across the white deck-planks and inquired where he was to shape a course for next.

“Home, captain, and by the straightest track you can take.”

“Then your highness's experiment is ended? I trust it was successful.”

“It is not ended, captain. The developments I hoped to see have not yet taken place. My visit was premature. They have not passed the plant-stage yet. One is a sturdy tree; the other a pretty flower: nothing more.”

“But will they ever be anything more?”

“Time will prove: time alone. I may

see it, or I may not. But still I firmly believe that time will witness their further evolution."

There was a silence for some minutes, broken only by the noises of shipboard, and then the sailing-master spoke a word or two, stammered, hesitated.

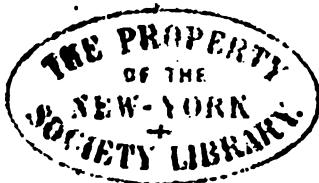
" You may speak freely, captain."

" Then if your highness will pardon the question, I should like to ask if you do not think the experiment somewhat of a cruel one ? "

The tired-faced student turned round and smiled wearily.

" I wish I could change places, mentally and physically, with either of them, and take the risks. If we are both alive, captain, to come back after the elapse of another decade, you will agree with me. You shake your head. Well, it cannot be decided now ; but mark these words, and see if I am not a true prophet."





THE NEW EDEN.

THE FIRST CHAPTER TELLS
SOMETHING ABOUT ADAM.

THE sun was almost directly overhead. It looked like a vignetted disc of molten brass ; but one could not get a more definite idea of its form and colour. The eye objected to gaze aloft for more than a moment at a time ; and during so short a survey as that, accurate determination was impossible, for the intense heat made the atmosphere tremble and shimmer, and one could make out little more than a waving dancing mass of rich sulphur-coloured light, hung loosely in a fathomless chaos of placid blue.

It was wonderfully hot. The heavy waves of heat from above beat down on

one's head with sullen remorseless force, and the reflected glare from the water burnt like the glow from white-hot metal. The trade-wind was blowing, of course. That was an institution the islands had never known the lack of. But the trade-wind under the mid-day sun was too warm to be very refreshing. There was a suggestion of cool in the crumbling thunder of the rollers as they ripped themselves to pieces on the coral reef; and the hoary heads of the surges, and the white spume flakes were tantalizingly like snow. But the suggestion was not strong enough to be refreshing. The fierce radiance above swamped it at birth.

Beyond the narrow strip of glaring white strand which fringed the shore of the island close by, were the varied greens of a rank tropical vegetation which covered everything. Above them hung a thin blue veil of tenuous mist, which

hinted at heat of a slightly different kind to the dry burn which scorched the sea. It was a sweltering warmth of the vapour-bath sort which is easy to be borne if the pores of the skin act normally, and which is on the whole not unpleasant.

And the rulers and people of this quiet sunny region, what of them? On the restless ocean beyond the line of reefs not a sign of human life or workmanship was to be seen; and the smooth lagoon within those stony barriers was similarly void, unless one chose to look upon a forked log covered by a few rushes as a craft not of Nature's building alone. That the wood was dead and decayed, and had been broken adrift by the wind and its own weight, was evident; and it might be allowed that the rushes had straddled themselves across it without a lift from human fingers. Such rafts are daily to be seen on the rivers and coasts of an untouched country. But this crude bark

was bearing a cargo. On the reeds were lying some eight or ten small fish of different genera, simply executed by having had their heads bitten off. Separately, each of these items might have been accounted for in various ways; but there is only one animal in the scheme of creation (as known to us at present) capable of performing all the items of the combination—and that is man.

Still, as I said, the lagoon was deserted. There was no man in sight. And yet the dead fish were moist-scaled, and limp; which, taking into account the fierce heat of the sun-rays pouring down upon them, showed that they could not have been out of water more than forty minutes at the longest.

The matter was puzzling, but there was other evidence which gave a vague hint at the truth. Hovering and sweeping through the air some sixty feet above the raft was a large strong-winged bird. It

was a fish-hawk, by instinct anxious to steal, and yet apparently fearing to. His keen poacher's eye evidently saw some guardian of the treasure who was invisible to a less favoured sight, and his former experience warned him that robberies of this sort were apt to be dangerous.

Presently the fish-hawk gave an angry scream, and swooped away to seaward in search of other prey. It was useless for him to wait any longer. A shadowy shape was darting up through the clear green water near the raft, which consolidated as it rose, and in a moment or two broke out upon the surface.

It was Adam, returning from his hunting-grounds.

In no wise distressed by his six-minute dive, the new-comer leisurely inhaled a fresh breath, added a double handful of shell-fish to the store of food already collected, and then cast his eye over the whole as though making a mental

calculation. Apparently he thought there was sufficient, for swimming round to the further side of the raft, he placed on it the pointed stick which served him as a defensive weapon against sharks, and commenced pushing the conveyance slowly towards the land.

As his fishing operations had been conducted within fifty yards of the beach, he had not far to go; and quickly getting into soundings, dropped his legs and waded ashore, carrying the raft with him, and depositing it safely high and dry. Then adjusting his toilette with a simple shake, he sat down there and then to devour his meal.

He was very seal-like in his amphibious existence at that date.

After having eaten his fill, which he preferred to partake of before the sun's rays dried and tainted it, Adam got up, stretched himself, and began to walk homewards.

It was difficult to guess his exact age, for a man who has never known society differs from others of his species who have had their gregarious instincts satisfied; but from one thing and another, one might have put him down as being somewhere between twenty and twenty-three. His skin was a ruddy-brown, save at the back of the neck, where a cascade of black hair warded off the sun's rays, and kept the flesh ivory-white under its thick shelter. His face was a strong one in mould, though its expression was slightly vacuous; and his form was tall and well-proportioned, though his shoulders were bent, and his gait was slouching.

Adam swung his hands by his side as he shambled along, and whistled to himself a soft vague tune that was not without a certain barbaric tunefulness. He had filled his belly, and so was contented. When he reached his head-quarters, he

would be more contented still. His residence was only figuratively a "home." It could not have been called a house of any sort. The climate was mild, and shelter was not a necessity. He might just as well have camped out wherever he happened to be. But Adam preferred to go home when the business of the day was over; the why and wherefore he should do so being unknown to him. At that period of his career he did not puzzle himself with useless questions: in fact, he never set himself mental problems of any kind. A certain animal instinct guided him to a limited extent, and he did not know enough to want anything beyond what instinct deigned to teach him.

Not having far to go, he soon reached his destination. It was a shallow concavity in a low bare cliff. Adam was a cave-dweller—at least in theory; for such a hollow could scarcely be dignified by the name of cave—thereby showing

that his intelligence had leaped back over the generations, and drawn from its primæval ancestry. The furniture of his abode was simple. It consisted solely in a heap of dead dry leaves, upon which he could lie during the day, or amid which he could burrow if his naked body was chilled with the damp mists of night. The charms of exertion, for exertion's sake, were unknown to him; and so, as the day's fishing was a matter which was soon completed, the leafy couch supported him for the greater part of his time. And Adam conceived it to be all he needed, for he was a simple-minded man then, and his wants were few. Indeed, his existence at that epoch was one which many men, cast in other stations of life, would give their all to enjoy. He had no thoughts, no troubles, no worries. His greatest ill was a mild stomach-ache, and he never contracted even that trifling ailment otherwise than deliberately. Food was to him

food, and as a rule it was nothing else. The exception was a fish with red fins and a back vari-coloured as the sunset. It had a delicate piquant flavour which tickled his palate. It was his one dainty. Occasionally, when the mood seized him, he indulged in a surfeit of this many-hued dish. He had a foreknowledge of the consequences, and paid his penalty with stoical resignation. The feast was quite worth the trifling charge for candles. His mind evolved further later on, but at that period this was its highest effort.

Adam's brain had never received any training, and consequently most of its powers were absolutely dormant. Memory, for instance, was almost an unknown power to him, simply because he never had occasion to exercise it. Landmarks in his history were few, and he vegetated on from day to day without counting the months that passed. He did not know in

the least how long he had lived on the island. He could not have told if he had been born there. Indeed it never occurred to him that he had been born at all. How should it have done?

He hadn't even propounded to himself Topsy's "growing" hypothesis. He was very ignorant.

Of course birth was constantly taking place around him. The fish spawned; the birds hatched their eggs; the seed-germs sprang into plants with tropical quickness. But man must have been personally fed on the lore of many generations before he can make the proper deductions from facts like these; and Adam was no trained observer. All this was as nothing to him: he saw it not.

As to how he came on the island, he had not the remotest, dimmest recollection. And the mists which swallowed up his past surged very closely on the mild sunshine of his present. With him,

sufficient for the day was the food and rest thereof.

Adam might have been the first man: he might have been the only member of his species. But he did not know it. He did not even know he was a man at all. He was conscious of hunger, heat, and cold, and of a danger from sharks; and that was all. Beyond this, at that time, thoughts did not disturb or interest him. His mind was a blank, whose colourless magnitude it is difficult to conceive, and almost impossible to explain.

Picture him, after the short hour's labour for the day was done, lying on his heap of leaves, with head pillow'd on his clasped hands, whistling dreamily, vaguely. Warm, comfortable, well-fed, he was passing the hours with eyes closed, and mind and body at perfect rest. He was autocrat of his world, a pleasant smiling genial world which gave him food

almost for the asking. His subjects demanded nothing of him. He sighed for no companionship, knowing not what companionship was. If we are cynical, and take happiness as being freedom from pain, we must call his existence an ideal one.

THE SECOND CHAPTER SPEAKS
OF THE VAPOUR THAT ROSE.

ADAM was, as has been hinted, averse to useless exercise ashore. Perhaps the fact of his being so absolutely at his ease in the water may in some degree account for this. Seals, if you will recollect, though fond enough of basking on a solid surface, are not addicted to promenading. But the old saw anent none of us being masters of all our actions, applies even to the autocrat of an Eden, and occasionally force of circumstances made Adam take a longer walk than usual.

In one especial instance, a change of this kind from his general routine helped him to make a discovery ; and as the face

of his life was utterly transformed thereby, it is worthy of particular detail.

The thing of course centred on the chase, and was indeed the outcome of that natural instinct which teaches all sentient animals to avoid the pursuer. Till Adam came there had been a perpetual close-season for the fishing in the lagoon, ever since the coral wall crept up from the deep and enclosed it. His rights, it is true, were invaded by the gannets and other sea-fowl, by the dolphins and the sharks; but their poaching did not amount to much, for the preserves re-stocked themselves very rapidly, and, save for them, he had the whole to himself: but, as with other coverts, the game grew wild if too much disturbed. At least the winged portion—the fish—did; the ground game—*mollusca*—being less scary. But since it was in the finny tribes that Adam's stomach delighted, he found it was advisable to change his hunting-ground as

much as possible every day, a piece of lore which it does not take a great deal of intelligence to arrive at.

This he did mechanically, and, taking the various beats in rotation, worked methodically from east to west, and began afresh at the eastern extremity again about once a month.

The only point where there was any difficulty about the work was at the western end. Here there was a submerged rock lying off in the lagoon ; and between it and the shore, which was steep-to, a current ran at some four and a half knots to the hour. Adam had felt its influence more than once, and had had two or three hardish swims to get back to a landing-place ; for from time to time his sieve-like memory would fail him, and he embarked his fortunes from the dangerous spot without a thought of the race which swept it.

On the occasion in question he had

swum leisurely out, never looking backwards at the shore, and consequently was wholly unconscious of his rapid drift to westward. His captures were not rapid ones that day; and so, whilst he made many dives, the heap of spoil on the raft grew but slowly. And in the end, when he had gleaned a sufficiency, and turned to go up to his landing-place, he found he could not stem the current.

He had swum a goodish time before arriving at this conclusion, and had wearied himself considerably; but finding at last that it was of no use struggling further, he turned over on his back, used the little raft as a pillow, and floated resignedly with the stream. The steep rocks beside him had no foreshore; and next to them came a length of mangrove swamp, where landing was equally impossible. He must go round to the tail of the island, whither he now dimly recollects to have been previously.

Yes, he had put in there once before—no, more than once — in fact, several times ; and there was an eddy which set one on to a smooth shelving beach of clayey coral sand. How a suggestion does remind one of a chain of circumstances ! All he had to do was to float down there philosophically. So he did it, whistling gently, and keeping a look-out for any black triangular fin which might be taking a cruise along the surface in his direction. For the devil, without whom an Eden would be incomplete, here assumed the form of a shark ; or rather of many sharks, for his name was legion. Adam, however, did not fear the sharks. He was watchful, and when one attacked him, he resisted it and crammed a pointed stick vertically between its well-toothed jaws ; whereupon it would flee from him, and in the course of a few days die in much torment, thereby not only receiving punishment itself, but affording

a salutary lesson to its brethren. However, wise sharks only attack men in water where men are not able to take care of themselves; and so Adam's promptitude of action on former occasions had instilled a wholesome fear into the resident sharks of his immediate neighbourhood, it was seldom now that his journeyings were interrupted.

Adam's voyage was a pleasant one. His hands dangled idly; his long hair floated around him like a halo of fine seaweed. The warm tropical brine cradled him as comfortably as his couch of leaves could have done, and the current bore him smoothly along. It was as easy a mode of conveyance as he could have wished for, and though he was an involuntary traveller, it never struck him that this was cause for regret. He was empty-minded enough to accept it as being all in the day's work.

Accurately to the moment set down in

Nature's time-table, the journey came to an end; and the passenger was delivered on the sloping beach, his destination. He scrambled above the water-line, shook his hair back over his shoulders, and sat down to eat; devouring his whole catch, not because he wanted it, but because it was there—a conclusive reason to an aboriginal.

Then he looked around him. He didn't remember the spot in the slightest, although he had been there before; but instinct told him that as the shore-route was barred by cliff and mangrove swamp, the only homeward track lay over a high spur jutting from the island's central eminence. So he dipped his lips into a stream that trickled over the sands, and then setting off, entered the jungle of dense rich undergrowth, and was soon pressing a path through the hot moist gloom of a virgin forest. He passed clumps of banana and plantain, wound

through groves of oranges and lemons, burst ripe guavas under his feet, stumbled over fallen brown-husked cocoa-nuts ; but though their colours vaguely pleased his eye, he regarded them much as he did the coral shrubs on the floor of the lagoon—beautiful perhaps, but unedible certainly.

Ever and anon he sat down in some small clearing swept out by a fallen tree to rest, not because he was exactly tired, but because he felt lazy. Excessive bathing does produce that effect, as many can witness. The exertion of swimming may strengthen the bone and harden the muscle, but the effect of the water is to dissolve out of the system any desire for heavy exertion on land. So as Adam had got no engagements to fulfil which might have caused him to hurry, he called frequent halts, and thus pursued his way indolently. Clearings of any size were rare, for in a tropical climate the bare spot of to-day is knee-deep in verdure

to-morrow, and for the most part the feathery tree branches interlaced close above his head, and entirely blotted out the blue beyond. Landmarks for guidance he never got, but for all that he held on his way unhesitatingly, and steered in a dead straight line. This is an especial faculty of the aboriginal. Civilized man has it not. If left to his own powers in a forest, his footmarks will describe a tolerably accurate circle.

At last Adam emerged from the lower forest land, and wading through the narrow fringe of grasses at its edge, came out on to the rocky upper flank of the spur. It was steep, at least tolerably so, and not being over-active at this sort of work, he had to use his hands as well as feet for locomotion, and scrambled on to the crest a trifle exhausted.

He lay first of all facing eastward, gazing over the ground which he would shortly have to traverse, having thrown

himself down on a level spot under the lee of the ridge. But being hot, and a trifle wearied by exertion, he found the closeness of the sheltered side unrefreshing, and so stepped up again on the ridge where he would have full benefit of the trade-wind's cool fanning.

His new perch was a narrow one, and he sat huddled up, with arms clasping his knees, and chin just above them. For awhile his eyes roved dreamily over the varied greens of the forest beneath him, and then they strayed to the smooth glistening lagoon, his harvest-field. But the glare dazzled him, and he raised his glance to seek relief from the more sombre colouring of another islet some eight miles distant from his own. He gazed on it heavily from under his lowered brows for a few slow minutes, and then appeared to be gradually wakening from his habitual lethargy. His eyes focussed themselves on one particular spot, and

stared at it incessantly. His hands slowly unclasped; his legs straightened; his head erected itself. Then he sprang smartly to his feet.

Adam was prey to a curiosity that was new to him, and all through seeing a thin blue film of vapour steal up from the herbage of a neighbouring islet.

“What could it be?” he thought. He looked around him. No, there was nothing like it on his own domain. Certainly the central mountain was capped with a snowy billow of cloud, but clouds were only for the high ground, and this strange thing was emerging from the clear air by the sea-level.

This, his first effort at induction, exhausted Adam’s surmises for the time being; and till the sun dipped below the horizon and closed out the view, he stood there and stared at it with wonder only.

Then he returned to his cave-dwelling, burrowed amongst the leaves, and for the

first time in his life remained awake far into the darkness. It would be flattery to say he was thinking, for the power of thought had yet to be born in him; but on that night his brain began to surge and rouse from its dormant state, and under the change Adam felt as he had never felt before.

On the following day he went up to the ridge and stayed there till the calls of hunger summoned him down to go fishing; and he did the same on many succeeding days. Sometimes he saw the blue vapour; one day thin and compact sprouting afar into the sky, on another merely filming above the tree-tops; but generally it was not in view. He was still without the slenderest theory as to its cause, and had no hope of discovering one; but it interested him as a strange thing must interest a sentient man who has never had anything of the kind to hold his attention before. In fact, as

time went on, it exercised a complete fascination over him ; and as regularly as the sun climbed into the heavens, did he scale the mountain spur and crouch there with curious gaze. Clouds and the morning mists were the only things he could compare it to, but the strange appearance was none of these. No, it was a thing apart ; and it bewildered him utterly.

One evening, as he was lying awake, an idea struck him. Once on the other island, he could see how matters lay for himself.

Being slow-minded, this did not go home all at once. Indeed, its period of gestation spread over many days. But the wish grew upon him more and more as he stared at the film of vapour without understanding anything further about it, till at last he determined to put his scheme into execution.

It was no sudden hysterical resolve, this. Your explorer likes to know as

fully as possible what he is going to do before he starts. Neither Columbus nor Amerigo Vespucci set out to discover their new world without first well weighing all the known dangers in their path, and allowing for those unknown perils which experience told them they might well expect. They were brave men, every one will allow, but Adam was braver. He certainly had an advantage over them in being able to see his bourne, which they could not do, but he was far behind them in another matter. He was used to coastal navigation, but of trafficking on the broader waters he knew nothing. They and their denizens were to him absolutely unknown, and therefore a terror ; for, mind you, a ship's sheathing is a very different kind of bulwark to your own skin.

It was not exactly the distance which posed Adam. By itself that was a mere nothing. The water was warm, the

current was in his favour, and he could have swum the eight miles with comparative ease. But it was what that strip of sea-lake might contain that put fear into him. A single shark he could tackle with his sharpened stake; but supposing others came at him when the weapon had been carried off by a victim, larger sharks perhaps than those which cruised in his own waters; and—strange beasts were always passing him under the surface—supposing worse than sharks attacked him. And, ugliest dread of all, supposing there were land-sharks on the other islet against whose opposition he could not go to shore. What would become of him then? Even if fresh he could scarcely hope to get up to his own territory again against the stream; and he would be wearied: so he must inevitably drown.

Having commenced to be a reasoning being, he showed himself all these points

in a critical light, and disliked the look of them vastly. He acknowledged that they terrified him. Pluck, you must remember, is a thing we learn from our companions; and Adam was a lone man.

But the desire to visit the other island increased upon him, and gave him no peace. Then another idea seized him.

If he could only take the journey in several stages, so as to be fresh for each one!

He pondered over this point for a week, and one day suddenly left his seat on the mountain spur, and for the first time in his life ran—ran down to the shore, and looked steadfastly at his tiny raft. He seemed to derive some vague hint from it, but for a long time he could not put the notion into tangible shape.

The intelligent reader at once sees

that simple addition was the only thing needed. But it must be remembered that even simple addition had to be invented by some one. It did not evolve spontaneously either out of nothing or out of chaos. So Adam spent most of his spare hours during another week staring at the raft, with the notion he wanted tickling at his fingers' ends, but ever eluding a firmer grasp.

The tiny craft had certainly been made by his own hands; but it was no invention. It replaced a former one which he had found floating ready-built by Nature for his convenience, and which he had used till it had collapsed into its primitive elements again through sheer old age. But little by little the mists of difficulty floated away, and the thing became clearer to him, till at last he set to work with a knowledge of what he was going to do. With hands and teeth as his only working tools, and an

utter lack of technical skill to further hinder him, his labours were neither speedy, accurate, nor effective. But the thin blue column of vapour was a lure that kept him doggedly to his task; boughs, logs, and lianes were woven together; and at last there floated on the lagoon a thing that was the first boat in Adam's world.

THE THIRD CHAPTER REVEALS
WHAT EVE SAW EMERGE FROM THE WATERS.

THE whole dell was lovely, a triumph of Nature's gardening; but the tiny open space on its hither flank was an earthly paradise. It was delicious to the eye, it was grateful to the nostrils, it was pleasing to all the senses. One felt that no addition to its charms could be welcome. It was perfect.

On the further side was an orange grove, not of stunted bushes such as one sees on the shores and islands of the Mediterranean, but of sturdy trees under whose groined and vaulted foliage one might walk erect, and whose luscious yellow spheres one could not reach with-

out a climb. Day in and day out, the trade-wind rustled through these leafy aisles, crossed the crystal brook which tinkled along a pebbly channel below, and discharged its cool aromatic breath full into the clearing. The fragrant zephyr seemed to add scent to the flowers, as it rustled away through the vines and orchids which draped the columned palms at the back, and to keep the verdure of all the plants perennially sweet and fresh.

And all was of Nature's gardening. Eve saw and appreciated the beauties around her, but she had no hand in their ordering herself. And so the lily was not painted, but remained a lily still. Yet Eve had a rudely artistic eye, and the only piece of her handiwork which was to be seen there harmonized peacefully with the whole. It was a bower, a rustic structure of foliaged branches, slender wands, and broad heavily-ribbed

banana leaves, partly re-rooted and growing from the kindly soil, partly dry and dead, but all overlaid and woven together by clinging tendrils of the creeping plants, and jewelled from foot to roof-tree with brilliant fantastic orchids.

All Eve's senses took delight in these beauties of her surroundings.

The morning sun was high in the heavens before Eve awoke, and even after lifting her eyes she did not rise. She gave a half-sigh, smiled faintly, closed her lids again, and turned over on her other side to enjoy the luxury of a second doze.

Like Adam's, her mattress was of dry spring leaves, but she had progressed beyond him in the matter of coverlet. To protect her body from the night dews, she had stitched together a patch quilt of coarse palm-hessing, and lined it with downy tufts of wild cotton. You see Eve's ideas of comfort were in advance of those of her fellow-mortal who reigned

over the adjacent islet, and consequently her invention had in some points outstripped his.

Eve was roused finally by a voice calling her. A small parrot, with one wing trailing on the ground, had waddled in through the entrance of the bower. She looked up and spoke to the bird, and was answered, though not intelligently. But the sound of speech pleased her, and so the disjointed conversation went on for some time. Eve would have preferred a sentient companion ; but as that boon was denied her, she put up with the bird, into whose mechanical brain she had instilled a cluster of sentences which were delivered at haphazard. She would rather have passed the day without food than without talking.

However, food was a necessity to her, so after enjoying her matutinal chat, she threw off the coverlet and got up. Then going out into the open she stretched

herself luxuriously, and cast a complacent eye over the curves of her well-moulded form.

She was a shapely woman of twenty ; supple-limbed, comely-faced ; with heavy masses of sunny golden hair falling over her breasts and back and shoulders. Her skin was browned, but not to so deep a tint as Adam's ; whilst her face was far brighter and far more intellectual in expression than his. Yet one could not have pronounced unhesitatingly as to which of the two was the higher type of humanity. At present Adam had not half her wit, nor a tithe of her general cleverness ; he could not even utter his thoughts aloud ; but his forehead had begun to pucker, and his brain to strive after knowledge which it didn't possess, whilst she was perfectly contented with what she knew already, and likely to remain so. But this is a point which will come out further as their history

develops, so at present we will leave the comparison unmade, and return to Eve's morning exercises.

Her first move after arousing herself into wakefulness, and taking in the fresh morning delights of the flowers and foliage around her, was to walk round to a pile of pale gray ashes at the back of her bower. She stirred about the centre of these with a piece of stick, and unearthing a few fragments of glowing charcoal, tossed them together, and added fresh fuel from a stack close at hand. Then, after watching for a minute or two till the yellow flames began to crackle up, and the fire was thoroughly alight, she stole off amongst the tree-stems, and was lost to view in the forest.

In about an hour she returned, bearing with her a small jewel-coated lizard, a bunch of plantains, and three green cocoa-nuts. Culinary operations were simple but effective. The lizard, shrouded

in a garment of clay, was buried in a grave dug in the midst of the embers; the plantains were laid on to toast; and Eve sat herself down upon a moss-covered stump, and talked to the parrot till her breakfast should be ready.

Experience had taught her to calculate the requisite time, and when that had elapsed she took the lizard out of his fiery resting-place, and removing clay and skin together, exposed the flesh done to a nicety. On that and the plantains she made her leisurely meal, and washed it down with nectar from the green cocoa-nuts.

The parrot meanwhile stood near, and from time to time bending over his head knowingly on one side, rubbed the crown of it against her leg, and was promptly rewarded with a mouthful. Eve revelled in a caress, and the bird was wily enough to know it, though he did not make his endearments too cheap by being over-lavish with them.

When the meal was over, Eve lay back on the soft moss, talking to herself and the parrot, crooning melodies of her own composing, and now and then holding conversations with imaginary beings amongst the trees, who replied to her with rustlings which she translated according to her own desires. She sometimes even carried her antics so far as to stroke her own sleek body with her own slim hand, deriving some vague delight therefrom. But, mind you, she did not try to imagine the hand an alien one. Like Adam, she was unconscious that the world contained another being in her own image; and when she rubbed and patted her bare flesh the pleasure was a purely physical one, without the slightest tinge of mental complement. Eve's knowledge of her species was limited to herself. She had a few memories of the past. She could recollect a time when she was shorter and slimmer, when she could

press through interstices of the forest which were barred to her now, when her hair was less luxuriant, when—oh, when she was different in many ways. But though these facts came back to her when she wished to recall them, it was seldom that she conjured them up. She was too content with her present to care for retrospection. And so as she grew, the past, which she valued at nothing, was more and more vignetted into forgetfulness.

As the sun drew nearer overhead and began to dapple her limbs with gold thrown through the tree-tops, Eve moved off into the bower, and there composed herself for a mid-day siesta.

But it did not last for long. When the meridian heat had burnt itself out, and the shadows were beginning to gain strength and lengthen out again, she rose briskly, and once more passed beyond the limits of her clearing. She was

young, and full of health and strength, and these things beget energy; and she had moreover to forage for her next meal. Eve was not savage in this respect. She did not gorge herself once for the whole day. She liked to do her eating at thrice, and was dearly fond of a bite and a sup of something sweet between-whiles, for the afternoon-tea instinct of the sex was thoroughly developed in her. And so she was accustomed to roam through some tract of her domain every day.

The islet was not large, and Eve knew the whole of it perfectly; but as the paths which her feet had made were many, and without set direction, she was always able to select some combination of stages that was new to her.

Every afternoon she turned out in this way, browsing, bird-fashion, on the fruits which struck her fancy, and ever, Diana-like, keeping her eye open to the chance of a more solid capture. She did not

possess the swift-flying arrow, nor the sling, nor the lance, nor the sword, nor the knobkerry. In fact she had no fashioned weapon. But she had acquired a knack—lost to ladies since the days of the huntress-deity—of hurling a missile in such a way that it often reached the mark aimed at; and by this means she usually contrived daily to replenish her larder with, say, an uncouth-looking hornbill, or a gay-plumaged parrakeet.

However, on the afternoon in question, her foraging for a supper-roast had for some time not been attended with success. Thrice had she hove weighty pieces of root timber at perching birds—and missed; twice had she flung herself at megapodes crossing her path *en route* for their laying-yards, and twice been rewarded by tufts of unnutritious brown feathers; and once she had missed a big monitor lizard by an inch, and suffered him to escape into a cranny without even being able to rob

him of his tail. And the day was wearing on. It seemed as if her evening meal was destined to be a purely vegetarian one.

The day was drawing to a close, and Eve had already turned homewards. She liked to have everything completed by sunset, and then to enter her bower, lie down, and snug her head beneath the coverlet; for she had a horror of the darkness.

Of a sudden she stopped. A white-bodied kingfisher was perched on a bough close above her, settling down for the night. The knotted root flew fiercely through the air, and crushed in the azure head. The bird was killed on the instant, but by a final muscular effort, its dark blue wings spread out and moored the dead body securely to the foliage.

Eve took in the situation in a moment, and was in no wise put out by it. The tree was a young cotton-wood, with the

nearest branch twenty feet from the ground; but her muscular fingers and toes found holds amongst the interstices of the bark, and up she ran as easily and lightly as a squirrel could have done. The bird was soon secured, and the captor was laying-in along the branch to regain the trunk again, when of a sudden she stopped. Through a gap in the foliage was shown a tiny picture of the sea.

Eve stopped there, striding the branch for full five minutes, motionless as a second Brynhild. Then the kingfisher toppled down to the sod, a ruffled mass of white and azure plumage, and the huntress sprang eagerly up to the swaying topmost branches. The spell of silence was broken then, and she talked to herself and to the rustling tree-ghosts around as she had never talked before; but her thoughts were chaotic, and consequently her speech lacked coherency. Her heart was beating rapidly, and she had a hand pressed to

her bosom to check its pulsing. Her face flushed and blanched alternately, and she was dancing up and down on her lissom perch till the whole tree swayed again.

She was nearly wild with excitement, yet she could not tell why. All that had caught her eye from below was a tiny sea-scape, half hidden by the waving tree-fronds. All she could see more from above was a brown huddle of floating logs with something of a lighter brown crouched motionless upon them. It was a something she had never seen before; a something whose existence had never dawned upon her previously; a something whose form she could only conjecture then. The distance was great, and the seas were constantly hiding the logs and their burden from view. But by telepathy, or some far-searching power of the kind, the coming of this thing was stirring her up to the verge of hysterics.

Of a sudden, as she watched, her eyes

told her that the float had drawn nearer. She leapt from bough to bough like a flying squirrel, and in a matter of seconds was on the ground, and had started off through the forest towards the shore. She ran as fast as her supple limbs would carry her, pushing through the palm-scrub, and round the trees, and under the lianes, till her brow was beaded and the thick panting of her breath threatened suffocation. She had never travelled so fast before.

On she went, making straight across the island, till she had gone a few yards past a stream which trickled out of a morass. Then she slackened pace and hesitated. Finally, turning back, she walked to the brink of a placid black-rooted pool, and there stopped, examining her mirrowed length attentively. She looked herself carefully up and down from foot to head, and then stooping, scanned her features in greater detail.

She had done this before many times, and had gazed at her reflected self with smiling satisfaction, murmuring the while, "Pretty, pretty, beautiful." But now the change which had come over her made her view the image with vaguely dissatisfied eye. Instinctively she put up her fingers and combed out the ends of twig and scraps of leaf which the masses of her yellow hair had gleaned during that rapid flight through the woods; and splashing up the cool waters of the pool, she removed the earth-marks from her limbs, and for the moment felt half-satisfied. But there seemed something else wanting, which however soon suggested itself. As she moved off shore-wards again, a bush of hibiscus caught her eye, and she stopped and looked at it thoughtfully. But a little consideration gave her the wished-for idea, and plucking a dozen of the flowers, she wove them into a coronet and placed it on her head.

Returning to the mirror pool she gazed at her reflection again, first with smiling complacency, and then with growing puzzlement.

Blood-red blossom on golden hair: the effect was barbaric splendour, which pleased her. But what had led her to make it? That she was trying to understand.

It was her first effort at personal adornment.



THE FOURTH CHAPTER GLANCES AT
THE EMBARRASSMENTS OF AN INTRODUCTION.

THE wind had freshened up and was blowing heavily—was blowing almost a gale in fact. In the great sweep of ocean outside, the wave-crests were significantly hoary, and the roar of the long rollers as they burst into foam and sprang on the barrier reef was thunderous. In the lagoon, too, considering the small run that it had, there was a nasty little sea on, a short steep sea of that kind which makes wettest weather for all small craft. Adam's bark laboured and wallowed in it helplessly. He had given the fabric a large superficial area, but it was only one log deep, and, like many naval architects

have done before, and will do again, he found that his calculations did not bear a practical test.

The raft was bending about like a venetian blind in a breeze, and Adam was crouched in the middle of it, swept by every other sea—haggard, helpless, hopeless. Everything seemed to have gone awry. The winds and currents had all behaved unkindly. The voyage had lasted days instead of hours. Whilst in the broad sea-lake he had been drifting without power of moving himself. His powers of swimming, wherein he had trusted, were ruthlessly made of no avail. The devils of the waters had proved too many for him. Those seven pointed stakes, with which his armoury was furnished, had been used with dire effect ; but the lesson was not sufficient. It takes a shark some time to die when he is spritsail-yarded, and although in the meantime his torments are heavy, his surviving brethren

do not draw the obvious lesson till they see him floating with his white belly facing towards the sky. From time to time one of the conquered ones would surge madly past with jaws immovably locked apart, and Adam would follow with his eyes till the gaping victim was out of sight. Then he would glance at the fleet of black lateen-shaped fins which cruised so symmetrically around him, and remembering his weaponless condition, would shudder and feel that still more fear was put into him.

He was in pain with hunger, he was parched with thirst, he was weary with watching; and he ached from head to foot, for the wind chilled him to the marrow when he rose streaming out of the water.

His life had been an easy one, and he was unused to these hardships. But though he bitterly regretted the step he had taken, there was no hope of regaining

his own island now. So being an ignorant man, hope left him; for he saw no way out of his difficulties. He was quite of opinion that the sharks must get him in the end.

But in this hour of blank despair some hereditary doggedness, long dormant, cropped out into life, and forced him to struggle through to the bitter end. It would not allow him to throw up the sponge. It would oblige him to help himself so long as he could raise a hand to do it. So every now and again he tautened up a liane which was working loose; and every twenty minutes or so, when the patrol seemed a trifle less vigilant, he used his hands as paddles till the scurry of the warning triangular fins forced him to desist.

And thus by degrees, imperceptible to himself, Adam passed over a shoal where the current was slack, on to a deeper part of the lagoon where the tide set in a

different direction, and swept him steadily along towards his bourne.

He was usually very low in the water, and so for the greater part of the time his view was circumscribed to immediate surroundings. Then the gradual change of the raft's position had escaped his notice; and when at last he chanced to look from the top of a watery eminence and saw the coveted shore—and safety—and something else—close at hand, he was nearly paralyzed with astonishment. The sight literally made him gasp.

Next instant he slid down into a trough, and as the raft smothered through the next two wave-crests instead of rising dryly over them, his view was blotted out for some time, and he was constrained to think that what he had seen was really a dream.

But again he was perched on a rolling hillock, and again the scene was displayed before him. No, he was not mistaken.

The island was there surely enough, and he was nearing it rapidly. And that other thing? Why it seemed to be an exact replica of himself!

Again and again Adam bent his eyes on the shore, always focussing them on the other biped, who was sometimes standing still, sometimes running hither and thither along the beach, but always gazing at him intently. His coming seemed to be arousing interest, even excitement; but being unused to translating the gestures of his species, he could not make out whether the signs foreboded a friendly reception or a hostile one. But as they puzzled him, he was more inclined towards the sinister view.

By some curious logic best comprehended of himself, Adam had from the first connected this unlooked-for being with the mysterious blue vapour to discover whose origin he had left his own island; and in consequence he naturally

enough discovered and took possession of an entirely new set of tremors. The vapour was created by some means he did not understand; therefore the stranger was possessed of powers which he lacked; and therefore it was quite possible that he was running into danger. The sequence was obvious enough. But the perils of the waters which he was gradually escaping from were too heavy to be easily outweighed; added to which, it was impossible for him to return, even if he wished to do so. Wherfore Adam, like a wise man, determined to encounter the unknown before him with what courage he might assume: but for all that the prospect of the ordeal made him feel far from comfortable.

Let us look at the other side of the picture, where, allowing for different

temperament, much the same sort of mental turmoil was taking place.

Eve was nearly beside herself with excitement. Within the last few hours, and after twenty years of delay, the fact had been suddenly sprung upon her that she was not alone in the world ; and the revelation strained her brain to an almost bursting tension. Her feelings and anticipations she could not analyze in the least ; and though they were on the whole pleasurable, their intensity was well-nigh maddening. They affected her whole being. She could not stand still for more than a minute at a time. The restlessness of her mind spread through every nerve in her body. She raced along the hummocky beach, ran up and down the stems of the palms, danced on the patches of sea-moss, and talked excitedly to herself the whole time. Her antics constantly loosened the wreath of scarlet blossoms, and ever and anon she stopped to adjust

them. Wonderment at her action in placing them on her head had passed away by this. She had soon come to comprehend their use and object, and to look upon them as a necessary armour for the coming encounter.

The raft and its passenger, under the influence of stream and wind, now united, was nearing her rapidly. Being gifted with keen sight, she could distinguish the lineaments of the new-comer from a long way off, and noted that though they varied in detail from her own (as studied in the mirror pool), the pair were much alike. His hair, it is true, was different. It was not so luxuriant, and also it was black. On observing this, she instantly congratulated herself on the golden hue of her own tresses, that being in her idea incomparably the more beautiful shade. As he drew closer, she also noted with a vague alarm that the stranger was taller and heavier boned than herself, and she

glanced over her own supple rounded body, and involuntarily took a few steps backwards towards the sheltering woods. But the sudden movement half unseated the coronet of flowers ; and as she put up her hands to readjust it, a thought flashed which caused her to smile with a return of confidence, and to advance once more down the beach.

The occupant of the raft was regarding her curiously.

Actuated by a sudden impulse, she waved her hand at him. For a while he took no notice ; but as Eve continued to brandish her arms aloft, he lifted his hand in reply, and she was satisfied. It was the first communication she had ever received from a fellow human being, and it made a thrill tingle through her which set her feet dancing afresh.

Then she tried a hail, a short sentence of welcome such as she bestowed on her parrot when it roused her in the morning ;

but though she repeated it a-many times, the advancing mariner vouchsafed no response. He bent his ear to listen, but his face gave no signs of intelligence. So Eve set him down as a fool with much promptness. Her parrot always made some reply to her remarks, and though these were usually wide of the mark, they were better than a stone-like silence. Wherefore Eve assessed Adam's wit as less than the parrot's, and decided there and then that he was to be her vassal. But she did not undervalue the boon of his society for all that; and suddenly noting that the raft was beginning to sheer off towards a belt of mangroves, she forgot all about these hastily-formed ideas, and was once more wholly engrossed in the initial single hope of seeing a companion safe before her on land.

So she started signalling furiously for Adam to continue on his old course, and avoid the mangroves. She had narrowly

escaped from that hideous quagmiré herself once, and she knew that if the voyager attempted to disembark there, he would be hopelessly engulfed, and lost to her at once.

As the raft went on, and its occupant made no attempt to govern it according to her directions, this last thought went deeper and deeper home; and Eve's excitement, which had lately calmed somewhat, broke out afresh with tenfold intensity. The boon of companionship with another of her own species had been dangled before her eyes only to be snatched ruthlessly away again. She grew almost beside herself with the heaviness of her emotions. She screamed, she sobbed and shrieked in her agony of dread; but still the man took no heed of her frenzied warnings, and voyaged stolidly on, as she thought, to his doom.

Every time the raft rose on a swell it

had neared the tangled growth of slime and root by a yard, till at last she could tell how many waves would launch its occupant to destruction. There were but four more required. Fascinated, she desisted from her outcry, and watched in trembling silence. It was too late: she could give no help then.

The fatal four swept in, the raft struck and went to pieces, and the man slid off and passed out of her sight. He was being swallowed up in the black unctuous ooze, and was lost to her for ever.

Eve knew no more. For the first time in her life she had fainted.

Now, although Adam had in part comprehended Eve's signals, he did not know how to acknowledge them intelligibly. Moreover, he saw that, taking into account all his circumstances, her pilotage was erroneous. From his coign of van-

tage he could see the contour of the coast—which she could not do—and made out that there was a good firm beach which the same current was sweeping past further down.

He was not going to make the mistake of trying to effect a landing amongst the mangroves: he knew by experience what that meant as well as Eve did; but he was also aware that the shallow water alongside their roots would be free from sharks, and so his swimming powers would come into play again, and he would feel at home once more. So he let his crazy raft drift on till it was broken up, as Eve had witnessed, and then slipping off, was on hard ground in less than half an hour.

Crawling above the spray-line, exhaustion kept him stretched out motionless for some time; but hunger and thirst—especially thirst—began to assert themselves, and he raised himself wearily to

his legs, and looked about him. The foreshore was narrow, the dense tropical vegetation coming down almost to the water's edge. It would be a slow task forcing a path through that tangled jungle. But this did not trouble him much. Being a fisherman by trade, and a fish-eater only, his food lay in the sea or at its edge; and being exclusively a water-drinker, he would be sure to come across the wherewithal to quench his thirst if he kept on along the shore long enough. For streams, as far as Adam had observed them, never come to a final end inland, although they may for awhile dissipate in a swamp.

So turning his back on the mangroves — and Eve — he trudged heavily along towards the glowing sunset, with his foraging senses keenly on the alert.

As it chanced he had not far to go; and as the tinkling of the brook broke upon his ears before he reached it, his

pangs of thirst redoubled, and his tired feet broke into a run. Throwing himself down by the brink, he drank his fill, and rose back on to his haunches. Then stooping down again, he drank and drank more, till he nearly burst. Adam was no man for moderation in regard to the appeals of his stomach when the wherewithal to satisfy them was at hand.

The immediate effect of this debauch was pain; but conceiving that this arose from want of food, he clambered down into a rocky pool, and culling from it an armful of shell-fish, made from them a leathery meal, which he considered would last him until he had strength and opportunity to obtain better sustenance in the morning. And then, as the night had come, and his eyelids were drooping, and his legs refused to carry him any further, he lay down where he was, and heaping up the warm dry sand over his salt-encrusted body, fell instantly to sleep.

The morning was hot and far advanced before Adam opened his eyes again. He looked around him for a minute or so, forgetful of where he was; and then, as the events of the immediate past returned to his memory, he shook himself clear of the coverlet of sand, and rose stiffly to his feet.

The ordeal he had gone through had written its tale in very plain characters. His cheeks were hollow, and his eyes were glaring; his long hair was hardened into solid mat with salt and sand; the bones of his body stood out so prominently that they outlined themselves with shadows. Adam looked very gaunt, very hungry, very savage, and altogether unpleasant.

But after the lapse of a couple of hours —during which time he dived frequently into the lagoon, brought to shore a score or so of small fish and many oysters, and had eaten as much as he could hold,

washing the same down with copious draughts of water—he contrived to make himself look another person. His eye had lost its wild brightness; his brows were raised again, and the fierce linings of his face smoothed out; his lank hair once more streamed down his back, black and glossy; and the flesh of his body seemed to have plimmed out again till the valleys beside the bones were scarcely noticeable. A civilized man would have taken far longer to bring about this partial recovery; but you see Adam had the pull of being very uncivilized.

Having fulfilled the canons of the sex by attending first to his own physical comforts, Adam's thoughts naturally turned next to the strange being who had witnessed his coming, and who had made those various signs and signals to him on the day before. He had already connected her with the blue vapour which lured him into the perils of a voyage from

his own domain, and somehow—the thing surprised him—she had instantly usurped the principal interest in his mind. He was curious about the vapour still; but he was more curious about her. The reason of this he did not understand, though he tried hard to grasp it; but accepting the fact, he determined to examine Eve first, and let the other wonder stand over and take second turn.

As though she had been a tree, this untutored man expected to find the woman on the spot where he had seen her the day before; and, although his reasoning was wrong, his conclusion was correct. A medium intellect would have promptly decided that after the catastrophe which she fancied she had witnessed, Eve had betaken herself elsewhere. A cleverer man's decision would, as is often the case, have coincided with that of the complete ignoramus.

So he decided to go there forthwith.

There were three ways of reaching the place. The first was to swim round on the sea-side like a fish ; the second to fly over the mangroves like a bird ; and the third to walk, man - fashion, round the land - side. Number two was impracticable ; but Adam debated long between one and three before he could make up his mind to either. His instincts were human to a certain extent ; but they were fish - like as well, for he was a thoroughly amphibious animal. Moreover, he did not know the road by land, but he had already traversed most of the sea-route. So in the end he decided that he had had enough of exploring for the present, and without more ado started to make his journey by water. The way was short ; there would be no sharks close in - shore ; and if he found he couldn't stem the current, why then he would be carried back whence he came, and would be no worse off than before.

As Eve was as robust a young woman as one might chance to meet in a long week's march, and possessed, moreover, a constitution that had never been tampered with by tight-lacing, or physic, or ice-creams, or any of the other devilments of feminine civilization; and as her fainting-fit was purely and solely the result of an unaccustomed excess of excitement, it was not long before she came to her senses again. For, you see, Nature, taking the case in hand, threw her down, and allowing the blood to flow freely to the exhausted vessels of the head, soon got the machine of life into full running order again.

The poor thing was a trifle dazed at first, and sat up and passed her hands wonderingly before her eyes more than once before she could see clearly again; but of a sudden the events of the last hour or so re-collected themselves before her, and with an effort she was herself

again. Springing nimbly to her feet, she ran down to the water's edge. The straggling boundary of the mangroves was fringed with fragments of the raft heaving up and down on the swell; and Adam was not. No, she had lost him for ever; her dream of companionship had been but a dream after all—she must go back to the parrot. And Eve tore the floral wreath from her hair, and trampling it under-foot, wailed anew.

But a period was put to her grief. The last arc of the sun had dipped below the plain of water far away out there beyond the reefs, and the after-glow was rapidly deepening into purple. Already three stars were flickering brightly above her, and others were struggling into birth. There was no twilight in the zone where this Eden lay: for Night was a haughty goddess, who hesitated not to tread on the heels of Day.

Eve glanced fearfully around. Her

bower was far off in another quarter of the island; and between her and it lay a thick wood which she dare not traverse when the shades had thickened. Already the horror of darkness was upon her, and she was trembling like an agave-leaf in the trade-wind. She ran hither and thither across the beach through the rapidly deepening gloom, sobbing, terrified. She sought a shelter everywhere, but could see none which would harbour her.

At last, darting to the stem of a lofty palm, she climbed it with frantic haste, and reaching the crown, started tearing away the leafy fronds as though life depended upon her efforts. Then, coiling herself down, she muffled her head from sight under the stack of foliage, and being able to see nothing, knew that she was secure.

One cannot help envying the ostrich—and other bipeds—at times.

Eve's sleep was a troubled one, for the crown of a cabbage-palm makes but a sorry couch; and consequently she was treated to dreams in never-ending succession, in which she and Adam invariably posed as central figures. The parrot alone occasionally intruded, but only in the background. Adam was the superior animal, perhaps because he was the newer one.

She woke in the early morning heavy-eyed and unrefreshed, and promptly descended to the ground. But she did not return to her bower, neither did she set about foraging for breakfast. A bank of green moss had caught her eye, and on it she laid herself forthwith to make up for the broken dozing of the night. Eve liked sleep.

She roused herself finally at the moment when Adam was setting off to meet her, strolled into the woods and made her morning's meal from four small plantains

—for she had but little appetite—and then moved away towards her bower. But after a few steps she slackened her stride, wavered, and finally turned back. The memory of the evening before was big in her, and she could not tear herself away without one more look at the place. After that she would go away, endeavour to forget what had happened, and never venture near the spot again.

And so it came to pass, that at the very moment when Adam was hauling himself out of the water, she was bursting through the foliage which lined the other side of the beach ; and their eyes met. The surprise was mutual. Both stopped dead, and for full five minutes they stared at one another without moving a muscle.

Adam was the first to move. Being quite prepared to find the stranger of the day before in the land of the living, and in fact confidently expecting to come across her in that very spot, he naturally

recovered himself most easily: and rising-up from his hands and knees, made a single step away from the water. As Eve made no movement either forward or back, he took another pace, and then another, and then a fourth. But that broke the spell. Eve knew not how to swim, and so she regarded this newcomer, whom she had thought dead, but who had apparently rested safely all this time in the waters, with dread. Her courage failed her, and she fled screaming into the woods. The fright, looked at from that point of view, was natural enough.

At first she set off at frantic speed, feeling certain of pursuit; but hearing no crashing of branches to tell of heavy footsteps following close behind her, she gradually slackened her pace, and finally came to a standstill.

Bending her ear, she listened intently. Beyond the usual noises of the woods

there was no sound. The only live things around her were birds, and lizards, and insects. Then Adam had not pursued her after all!

A vague sense of disappointment crept over her. Eve herself was surprised at the feeling, for it was but a few short minutes before that she was exerting every muscle to keep clear of his reach. But she was disappointed that he had not run after her—not even a little way; and she felt a trifle disgusted too. What could he be doing? She ran up a palm and looked out. But the tree was not high enough to let her see over the foliage which intervened between it and the narrow strip of beach; so coming down, she climbed up a taller one—a cotton-wood. From that she could make out what she was looking for. Adam was there still, lying at full length on the white coral sand, twirling his thumbs and gazing at the sky. Also—yes, the

sounds came gently to her down the trade-wind—he was whistling.

She came to the ground again. She was beginning to feel irritated against Adam. She might be right yesterday, after all, when she set him down as a fool. But still he was a muscular fool, and therefore she could not get over her dread of his physical powers all at once. If he would come to seek her, she would not fly so far before him again. No, she would go slowly for just a few steps, and then await his coming.

And so she sat down and waited for an hour or more, and then climbed the tree again. Adam was still in the same position, studying the fleckless azure above him, and engaged in manual and musical exercises as before.

Eve felt sure then that he was a fool, and began to know that a slight was being put upon her. But she wished heartily that she had not run away so

determinedly in the first instance. If she had only made a pretence of flight, it might—it might all have been well. However, he might get wearied of waiting and seek her yet, so in this hope she waited for another long space, and then again went to her post of observation.

Horrors! The man was standing up. He was looking to seaward. He might be going to leave her for good.

Eve came rapidly to the ground. She felt she must take the initiative after all, or lose beyond recall the thing she wished for; and so with some trembling she began hastily to retrace her steps towards the coast. She only stopped once, and that was before a bush of hibiscus, for what purpose may be guessed. Her toilette did not take long, however. The minutes were too precious, and if she dawdled over minutiae, it might mean that, adorned or unadorned, her

chance was lost altogether. So pinning the flowers hastily into her hair by their own woody stalks, she pressed forward afresh with new confidence.

She reached the edge of the woods, and saw Adam in the very act of wading out into the water.

He had felt hungry again, and was merely going a-fishing. But this she did not know; and being certain in her own mind that he was on the point of leaving her again for good, she cried aloud for him to stop.

He turned and faced her; and then coming slowly up out of the water, advanced to meet her. And this time Eve held her ground.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER HOLDS FORTH UPON
EARLY EFFORTS IN SOCIETY.

MUCH cheap sarcasm has been heaped upon a certain African explorer who, when he came face to face with the man he had tramped over half a vast unknown continent to find, said, "Doctor Livingstone, I presume?" Come to analyze the thing, what else could he have said? The situation was a climax which had been tremendously worked up to, and any less formal utterance would only have crowned it with far worse bathos.

But conceive the position of our Adam and Eve. The one couldn't utter a word; and the other was completely ignorant of such sentences as "Good afternoon,"

“I’m so glad you’ve come,” or “I do hope you had a good passage”—which little inanities frequently give rise to sane conversation. Also it was impossible for the linguist to fall back on the formula quoted above and say, “Mr. Adam, I believe?” because, in the first place, she didn’t know the gentleman’s name was Adam, and in the second she was ignorant of the very existence of such a thing as a proper noun. Add to which, if she had spoken he would not have understood her. So the situation was incapable of being spoiled—or improved—by the utterance of any phrase, suitable or otherwise; and it was clearly a case for deeds and not words.

For a long time the pair looked one another up and down from a distance of two paces, curiously, and without embarrassment. Each saw that though the other differed in points, there was a general likeness, as there is bound to be

in two beings of the same species ; and as the one had only seen birds and insects and reptiles before, and as the other, still less observant, was acquainted with various *genera* of fish alone, it was a most allowable opportunity for a lengthy and interested stare.

But sight-seeing of this description palls after a while even on the least *blasé* people ; and first Eve, and then Adam, began to grow restless, and to wonder what should be the next move. The question was a difficult one to settle. Neither had the crudest notion of the usages of human society adapted for such a position ; and one naturally might have looked for an original development. But nothing novel came. The *dénouement* was a wonderfully hackneyed one. Eve gradually came to understand that Adam was the visitor, and that she, as hostess, ought to entertain him. So she said, “ Come with me, and see my home,” and

then moved off towards a path through the woods, leading the way.

The words were to Adam a meaningless sound; but the gesture which accompanied them was plain to him, and he followed close upon his guide's heels obediently enough, though roving his eyes watchfully about to make sure he was not being led into danger. For his mind was beginning to wake, and, like most sparsely-filled minds, it was pregnant with suspicion.

The forest was thick and matted together with scrub and creepers, and save by the paths which Eve had torn for her own convenience, it was more or less impassable. But every now and again they came across an open glade, and the leader would fall back a pace or two and come alongside of her guest. She talked to him, smiled on him, and pointed out those beauties of the woods which pleased her; and he looked where he was bidden;

and replied to her advances as best as he was able. But his perception was slow, and his power of expressing his ideas almost *nil*; and because his intellect was so much behind hers, Eve's natural feeling of superiority was largely tinctured with contempt. She had lost her sense of fear long ago. Adam's frame might be larger and heavier than hers, but physical encounter was strange to her, and of this she recked nothing. Hers was the stronger mind, and therefore hers it would be to govern. Indeed, during that walk she had decided that Adam was to be her slave, her serf, her servant; and was trying to figure out to herself in what way he might be made most available. It never dawned upon her that he might rebel against this arrangement, or that she herself might wish him to assume a more elevated, more familiar position. Friendship and love are not ideas you can learn from intercourse

with a parrot, nor yet can you pick them up by chatting to trees or eulogizing the shapes and colours of the flowers ; and Eve's ideas of sentiment were bran-new just then, and had their limits.

Adam, on the other hand, had made no comparisons between himself and Eve, flattering or otherwise. He formed no schemes. He simply awaited the outcome of events—the which is often a very sensible course to take, if you have only sufficient patience to see it through—and shambled along without looking much about him.

They reached the clearing by the brook and the orange grove after an hour's walk, and Eve, pointing to the bower, said that she lived there. Adam understood, and nodded to express the same—that crude gesture of assent being, by the way, a thing he had learnt on the island already—but he did not show any admiration. He looked inside, fingered the coverlet,

stirred the dry leaves, and then came out again and stood up. On the tapestry of flowers and creepers he did not bestow so much as a glance; but he turned again to Eve, and as she noted that his eyes, although they roved a good deal, always kept wandering back to her face and the coronet of flowers, she forgave him forthwith for not appreciating her bower. And when, after she had plucked a spray or two of orchids and adorned herself further, he actually smiled a rusty smile —he whose features had never so contorted themselves before—she smiled back upon him brilliantly, and felt a kindliness rise in her that she was at a loss to account for.

But for all that she had by no means abandoned her intention of making a menial of him. Indeed, it was not necessary that she should do so, for a servant who admires one is usually the best worker, and it is only when counter-

admiration commences that difficulties begin to crop up. And so far, Eve's feelings were absolutely wanting in that respect.

So she proceeded to appoint Adam her hewer of wood, and doubtless would have nominated him drawer of water as well if she had possessed a vessel in which the drawing could have been done, or if it had occurred to her to wish for water in a place other than that in which Nature had stored it.

“My fuel is used up,” she said to him, signing a translation of the words as she proceeded. “You must gather sticks and pile them here till the stack is breast-high. You understand? Yes? Very well; then I will go and collect food for the pair of us. Food—something to eat—ah, you grasp that, don’t you?”

Eve waited to see her new assistant fairly at work, so as to make sure that there was no doubt about his compre-

hension of what he had to do ; and then leaving him, plunged off into the forests to forage. They exchanged a nod at parting, and Adam busied himself with collecting an armful of sticks, which he carried back with him and deposited on the stack. But he did not return for more. He stood still, pondered awhile, and then chuckling softly, threw himself down on the bed of green moss close at hand, upon which the rays of the afternoon sun were beaming warmly. Eve expected to find a pile of wood on her return. She might expect, but she would not find.

He repeated this over and over to himself, and was in his quiet way vastly amused. It was a flash of elementary humour, having that true tincture of cruelty with which such primitive attempts are always tainted ; and being his first attempt at anything of the kind, he naturally took great pleasure and interest

in it. What the store of wood was for he had not a notion, nor did he attempt to discover. There were certain things he recognized as being beyond his understanding, and waited philosophically till they were explained to him. A young mind does wisely not to strain itself unduly at first. And meanwhile the joke could be enjoyed to the full by the simple knowledge that Eve wanted the wood for purposes of her own.

So Adam idled away the afternoon, placidly enjoying the beauties of his jest, and towards its close Eve returned. She was rather hot, and a trifle tired; for she had set herself to collect double rations, which of course entailed double exertion. And so when she came opposite to the place where the stack ought to have been, and saw it not, she naturally became extremely cross as well. But what could she do? When she asked Adam "What he meant by it?" he only pointed first at

the solitary faggot, then derisively at her, and then lay back again on the moss and laughed. It was impossible to get anything more satisfactory out of him.

Poor girl, it never dawned upon her that the thing was intended as a piece of wit; that Adam wished to imply that he had what is familiarly termed “scored off” her. She failed to see the humorous side of it altogether. From her point of view her bondman had rebelled, and her task must be to bring him back to allegiance. But how to do it she hadn’t a notion. When she used hard language at him—the same that served for the parrot when it stuck its claws into her flesh—she had the mortification to see him laugh all the more with pleasure at knowing that his jest had told so deeply; and when she bade him get up there and then and go and make good his remission, he flatly refused to understand. So at last she gave him up as a bad job, and set

to work making up the fire, and cooking the dinner.

As it turned out, she could not have made a more masterly move. Adam was soon reduced to solemnity again. He observed her rake amongst the gray dust of the fire-heap; he watched the dull red and black charcoal embers exposed to view; he saw the sticks laid lightly upon them; and he looked on apathetically enough whilst she knelt down, and bending low her head, fanned the fuel into a blaze with her breath. But when he saw the smoke, that same blue vapour he had come so far and surmounted so many perils to behold, created as it were before his very eyes, he started to his feet with rippling scalp and whole body dewed with moisture.

Eve, hearing him move, turned and took in the situation at a glance, and nodded to him significantly as who would say, "You see what manner of person you

have been taking liberties with." She did not speak, however; but crouching beside the rising pillar of smoke, glared at him fixedly for awhile, and then motioned him to sit down again. Adam obeyed, trembling. Then, without taking further notice of him, she went on with her cooking—cooking for two—and ostentatiously busied herself with the details till all was finished. Then, uncovering her roasts, she offered Adam a steaming bird and a couple of baked plantains, holding them towards him in tongs made from a pair of sticks.

He took the food willingly enough, not knowing, of course, that it was hot. But when the heat reached the nerves, he dropped the food with a howl of pain, leaped to his feet, and fled madly away. He darted across the slope into the brook, and plashed wildly over the stones down-stream. He was making for the sea. This place was strange to

him, and terrible. He would be safe there.

Eve looked after him, laughing. She had not intended to repay Adam's practical joke with another; but now that one had, so to speak, evolved of itself, and the stinging point lay in the other direction, she was by no means unconscious of the humour of it. In fact several times during her meal bursts of merriment overcame her, and she was fain to roll over and over on the short turf till they had subsided.

She extracted the fun of the situation to its very last drop, and the sweet draught lasted her till bed-time. But then the sun went down, and with it her enjoyment ended. Adam had not returned, nor had he shown any signs of doing so. But though he was out of sight, he was very emphatically not out of mind. He was the one object of her thoughts, and he most rudely persisted in

holding his place to the utter exclusion of everything else. The moon was an early one, and from time to time Eve cautiously pushed her tangled head from under the coverlet, and peered anxiously through the open portal of her bower. The clearing was always tenanted by the dancing shadows of the foliage alone; but there were deep shades between tree-stems which might have hidden an army within a stone's throw. From stalking birds and lizards, she knew how easy it was to creep up silently under cover, and so naturally she could make out invisible eyes watching her from the gloomy recesses, whenever she tried to do so; and what is more, she did it, inflicting self-torture with a persistency worthy of her sex.

During the day-time she had not feared Adam in the least; but at night he might well (for aught she knew) be another creature, and as she was not familiar with

his ways during the darkness, she had no contempt for them.

And so the night, which she had always loathed, had gathered in unto itself another terror, and Eve with much consistency at last buried her head for good, and cried and shuddered herself to sleep.

In the morning she awoke free from her tremors, but a prey to new anxiety. She got up and looked about the clearing. There was no Adam in sight, or trace that he had been there since his precipitate flight.

The little green parrot came up for a matutinal greeting, and was pettishly thrust aside. Eve had advanced past the stage of parrots. Her mind was set on an unfeathered biped now. She wanted Adam, wanted him badly; and Adam very rudely abstained from coming to her. She had not the patience to wait and see if he would turn up in the course of time. She remembered his powers of natation,

and feared he would go away and leave her for good. And so she made up her mind to go and seek him. You see she had had constancy forced upon her by the lack of another equally—shall we say—valuable object on whom to bestow her attention. It was *aut Cæsar, aut nullus.*

So she turned her back on the clearing, and strode rapidly down a forest path. The trees were sopped with dew, the clammy morning mists clung heavily to the vegetation, and the going was very unpleasant. Her sleek limbs were slapped by the wet foliage, and chilled with a perpetual shower-bath ; both of which she had a cat-like objection to in general. But now she noticed not the discomforts. The strong interest of her goal rose superior to all of them.

Adam, honest fellow, was humped down on the hot gleaming beach, chewing

the cud of bitter meditation. Like others of his sex, he had burnt his fingers over a woman, and as many men have done before, and as many thousands will do again, he was firmly determined to have nothing further to do with her. He was wishing most sincerely that he had been contented with minding his own business on his own proper island, and he glanced with rue at its wooded securities and at his blistered fingers alternately. But there was no means of reaching the one, and, so far as he knew, no method of curing the other. For you see he was new to the game: he had never been burnt before, and didn't know that in a few days he would not only be well again, but would have the skin over the wound well toughened against future attacks.

Many new allotments of Adam's brain had been opened out during the last few days, and one of them was at this

moment assisting him to speculate for the first time about his future—which was one of the pleasant ironies of the Fates, for a very inky future it seemed to him.

He was doomed to remain on the island for always—however long that might be—and the exchange from his own domain seemed in every way a change for the worse. Eve had no attractions for him. The fishing, so far as he had tried it, was not to be compared with his own. Those tasty monstrosities with red fins and vari-coloured backs were to be seen nowhere. The oysters had all got pearls in them, and pearls damaged his teeth. And the hunting was dangerous too. The local patrol of sharks knew him not, and therefore had no respect for his powers with the pointed stake; and so a lengthy course of disciplinary warfare lay before him whether he liked it or not. And add to all this, like other people unused to travelling, he was suffering from nostalgia.

He had always fancied his own shallow cave more than any other resting-place; but it was not till now that he had lost it, that he appreciated the full essence of its sweet homeliness.

The sum of all these things bore heavily upon him; and Adam bowed his head over his upraised knees, and groaned aloud.

He was groaning mournfully when Eve came up, and the sounds startled her. For a while she did not discover herself, and stood watching from the shelter of the trees; but seeing him pop his blistered fingers into his mouth, she thought she had a clue to his dejection. He was in pain. Yes, that was it. She had burnt her own digits many times, and knew exactly how it was. So making a plaster of leaves, and anointing it with unguent ready to hand on a castor-oil bush, she went out on the beach, and walked towards him.

Her movements were always cat-like, as a professional huntress's must be, and consequently Adam did not perceive her approach till she had gone round and spoken to him. But the sight of her roused him. Clambering to his feet he slouched backwards a dozen paces, and faced her with bent shoulders and glowering brow. She advanced, holding out her remedy, and saying that it would alleviate his pain. He retreated doggedly, looking upon her threateningly the while. He did not understand her words; he was ignorant of the nature of her peace-offering; and he wanted to have no further intercourse with her of any sort or kind. Being unable to express this verbally, he was doing his best to make her understand it from his looks, which were, to say the least of them, ugly.

Eve hesitated in her advance. She was beginning to fear this man again after all; but her quicker wit showed her the

sentences he was trying to impart, and she felt that if once the misconception was removed, all would go smoothly again. But how to make him understand that she meant well, that she wished to repair the accidental injury of yesterday? Eve considered awhile, and her bosom began to heave more rapidly, for Adam's demeanour was becoming more unpleasant every moment. She was getting badly scared. She had half turned to fly when a thought flashed on her, and turning to him again, she put the plaster of leaves and oil on to two of her own slender fingers, and held it there firmly.

Adam looked on at first dully. He didn't want to understand, and was not going to try to do so. But comprehension was forced upon him whether he liked it or no, and his brow began involuntarily to clear. His mind was wavering. The woman was signing to him that the charm she held in her hand would take away

the pain from his wounded fingers. He grasped that readily enough. But would it not be better to endure twice the agony rather than let her come near him again?

His blistered fingers brushed accidentally against his leg, and the ensuing twinge decided him. He slouched sullenly forward, and thrust out the damaged members towards her.

Eve's surgery might be rude, but it was effective; and as her hand was light and gave him no pain during the dressing, he got relief at once, and suffered her to complete the task without interference.

When she had finished, he did not bestow so much as a grateful glance by way of payment, but turned away and once more started to leave her. Gratitude is not a thing one learns in solitude, and Adam was still of opinion that it would not be good for him to cultivate the lady's further acquaintance.

But Eve thought otherwise. She feared

him not now, and so going after him, laid a soft detaining hand upon his arm.

The effect was magical. He wheeled round and faced her. Astonishment and delight were fighting for the mastery within him, and had ousted all other passions on the instant. It was the first time he had felt the touch of fingers other than his own, and it had thrilled him to the marrow. He even looked at the lucky arm in search of an outward mark, and seeing none, began to have a new understanding thrust upon him.

Eve saw the change on the instant, and she too was filled with joy. Smiling lustrosly upon him, she shook back her hair, and sat down with a happy sigh upon a patch of sea-moss, making room for him to take his place beside her. He did it promptly, and fell to stroking her sleek arm with his hand, with his cheek, with his own arm—the very thing that she hungered for him to do—without

further invitation. And finally Eve lifted Adam's arm, and putting it round her own neck, nestled up to him in the most matter-of-fact way in the world, without a blush, and without a trace of confusion. It was the enjoyment of innocence. And from that mechanical commencement, which produced physical pleasure, they gradually evolved into that intercourse of mind which produces the sentiment styled love.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER TREATS OF
PRIMEVAL ARGUMENT.

EVE did not think it strange that Adam failed to understand her speech, or that he had no verbal language of his own. Her parrot had been in exactly the same predicament, and she had been obliged to teach the bird, laboriously. And so she expected to teach her new companion, but his slowness at learning irritated her, and being ignorant of its cause, she made no allowance for it.

A language learnt in childhood, or babyhood, comes easily, and, whether it be pure speech or a dialect, usually retains its hold until death-time. And other languages may be picked up whilst one's

years are tender with more or less of facility, for the mind, and all the elaborate mechanical items of the speaking apparatus, are then most capable of taking unto themselves strong impressions. But as it is with folk who try to acquire a foreign tongue after that they have arrived at years of maturity, so it was with Adam —only more so. For he was a man grown before he had even attempted to utter an articulate sound; and thus his speech when it did come forth was halting and laboured. If he could only have whistled his remarks, as the indigenes of the Canaries do, he would have been comfortable; for he could whistle fluently. But though he made attempts to pipe his ideas into readable form, Eve neither understood him nor made any effort to do so, and he was obliged to have recourse to the more vulgar method of explanation which obtains amongst the world's majority.

The necessity of acquiring the art of conversation had impressed itself strongly upon him during that memorable afternoon down on the beach when he had discovered that it was no longer good to live alone. A man when he relinquishes his hermitage must talk if he can by any human means manage it. But it was long before Adam could get his tongue round even the simplest phrases, though he tried prodigiously hard to master its waywardness.

Unlike the parrot, whose oratory always increased by whole sentences at a time, Adam, after the manner of a man who finds himself suddenly plunged amongst the bewilderments of an entirely strange tongue, first committed to memory a scrappy list of substantives, and made use of them as occasion demanded. When he said "bird" he got a bird to eat; and when in the course of a sentence Eve mentioned the word "wood," he

started out towards the forest with intent to gather fuel. But communication by this primitive means is limited, and one's ideas are liable to misconception; so Adam gradually acquired command over a verb or two of varied tense and person, and then matters went more freely, and the grammar and the other parts of speech came tumbling in to him of their own accord. For, mind you, Eve's vocabulary was an extremely limited one, so that, after all, there was not very much to learn. But what there was of it served her purpose well enough. With unrestricted use of, say, four hundred and fifty words, you can do a great deal if you are not timid about employing the figure known as paraphrase, and if your ideas soar but little beyond the things immediately connected with your own creature comforts.

At first the instructress revelled in her self-imposed task. Adam was all in all

to her. She lived only to be his helpmate. His slightest nod it was a pleasure to obey. Her whole being was wrapped up in his welfare. She would patiently repeat a word or a phrase for an hour together till his unaccustomed lips had mastered its shape, and then she would throw her soft arms around his neck, and kiss him and tell him how clever he was—all of which Adam duly appreciated and remunerated her for. And during the time of a moon's rise and wane, they lived in one ecstacy of happiness.

But then the matter-of-factness of their everyday life began to grow up and dilute its poetry, and their demeanour towards one another gradually changed. Though the first glamour had worn off, they were fond of each other still, for you see neither of them were *blasé* to this sort of thing. She had not flirted with other men; he had never run after a single other girl: which makes them almost unique amongst

married couples. And when they sat down *vis-à-vis* to one another at meals, they really found it felt strange for a very long time, for, unlike the person in Mr. Kipling's book, neither of them had ever "been there before." But if you only give them time enough, even the most innocent pair will get accustomed to this sort of thing at last, and used to one another's ways, and in time they will acquire an insight into each other's weaknesses and failings.

And so by the time that the moon's crescent had thinned down to extinction, Eve had discovered that though as a rule Adam was good-humoured to a degree, there were occasions when his temper was a trifle uncertain, as temper is bound to be when it has never been schooled or governed. Her endearments would occasionally verge upon torments, which he would endure placidly enough for a time ; but if she persisted in them too long,

his brows would begin to lower, and his eyes to glint ominously. For a long time she did not know what would be the next development. She accepted these as omens of coming storms, and desisted from whatever she was doing to irritate him, and felt sorry for having commenced it.

Adam, too, found that Eve's great failing was laziness. The more work he was willing to do, for the simple payment of caresses and lavish thanks, the more he might do. So long as she was able to deck herself out with floral wreaths and garlands, and lie and bask, she was supremely happy. Birds he could not catch, lizards he knew not where to find, but she took to a fish diet amazingly when she found it was to be had without trouble, and instructed Adam in the art of cooking, so that even that labour was taken off her hands.

They seemed to have exchanged natures. She no longer took constitutionals, and

the paths of her domain through being untrodden were becoming overgrown ; and he, who was so short a time ago wont to spend the greater part of his day in dreamless *far niente*, was now a universal provider, constantly on the tramp and toil.

Now Adam saw no just reason why he should be the only working member of the household, and so as the days went on he protested more and more against it. For awhile Eve smiled on him and caressed him, and postured before him in all her choicest array ; and he yielded to her blandishments, and meekly fished for two, and then did the kitchen work afterwards. But when one takes one's salary out in kind of this description, a surfeit is apt to pall ; and so after awhile, Eve's kisses and endearments began to grow stale, and when such currency was held out, it aroused the black look. This Adam observed always

had the effect of making Eve bestir herself; and so as he had a theory that the labours of their daily life should be equally shared, the ominous face began to be put on more frequently as Eve's disinclination to return to the old cycle of toil increased.

All this while he was learning to speak and understand her language; and though Eve's formal lessons gradually decreased in length and frequency, as the novelty and therefore the pleasure of teaching wore off, she was constantly chattering to him and to herself, and so his progress never stopped. But it was slow. He found the uncouth noises which represented ideas in articulate shape hard to acquire; and his tongue often played him tricks by uttering sounds wholly different from those intended. And so his speech was halting and laboured, and Eve at times waxed sarcastic and derisive in her superiority. Adam might be painstaking,

but he was undoubtedly slow, and to her mind unintelligent; and her nature was one which could admire nothing short of brilliance.

Being without experience, she made no allowance for the huge disadvantage under which he laboured; and consequently, what she was pleased to consider his dense stupidity irritated her. And so she turned her tongue into a whip, partly to goad him into more vigorous and effective effort, and partly through sheer spite and vexation.

Adam was not a supersensitive man, and he bore a great deal without retort. But as the hide of a rhinoceros is not invulnerable, if you prick deeply enough, so there was a limit even to his heavy endurance; and when Eve's gibings grew too cruelly sharp and bitter, his brows would begin to descend, and a savage light to gleam evilly from the black depths of his eyes. Eve did not know

exactly what would come next, and so, as she feared the unknown, she always stopped short at or near this point. But as immunity from harm rendered her braver, and as familiarity with Adam bred contempt for him, she verged further and further towards the critical line. Her satire was not very refined, nor was her wit delicate; but under the circumstances it was of the most telling kind. Adam would not have appreciated less rough-hewn words and hints and actions so deeply. Her little cruelties were just the sort to go home to him..

And so matters went on till they reached a climax; that is to say, till she irritated the long-suffering man past endurance.

It came in the evening cool, which had followed on a hot baking afternoon. Eve was lying back as usual on her mossy couch, combing out her yellow hair with long slender fingers, and amusing herself

with teasing him from time to time, and toying with the broken-winged parrot. Adam was squatted close by, with arms clasped round his knees, watching her with glowering face; and although she glanced covertly at him ever and anon to note the progress of his wrath, she took no direct notice of his presence.

She was baiting him through the medium of a third individual—which is an ingenious device not reserved to an Eden alone. She had the parrot perched on an upraised knee, and was engaged in adding a new sentence to the disjointed string which the bird knew already.

“Logs are silent, so are fools,” she cooed time after time; and the parrot would repeat “Logs are silent” over and over again, but could be induced to add no more.

The words were a trifle ambiguous; but Adam felt them to be pregnant with insult—as indeed it was intended that he

should. And he looked more sourly every time they were reiterated. But he did not move. He sat still with his arms clasped round his legs, and watched. He had privately fixed a limit to his endurance, and that had not yet been reached. If it did not come, he would cool down again as he had done already oftentimes before. But if it did—well, then he should take action, though in what direction he had not yet decided. The impulse of the moment must guide him.

If Eve had known what was going on in her companion's mind she would doubtless have put a period to her amusement with some suddenness. But Adam was much-enduring, and she had seen him look like that often before. So she went on with her employment.

“Come, show us how clever you are.
‘Logs are silent, so are fools.’”

“Logs are silent—fools.”

The bird had caught up another word. Eve clapped her hands gleefully, and took a sly glance at Adam. He had not changed. She felt sure she could goad him further with impunity. So she repeated the whole phrase again, articulating each word with slow deliberation. The little green bird shook out its feathers. Eve preened them with a taper finger, and coaxed it to make a fresh effort.

“Logs are silent—so—fools.”

Adam’s hands were unlocked from his knees, and were clenching and unclenching themselves slowly amongst the grass ; but Eve, excited with success, did not notice. She sat up, and perching the bird on her wrist, stroked its emerald head, and kept repeating the lesson. As if struck with some dim foreboding, the parrot refused for a long time to utter another sound ; but the coaxing finger was patient, and at last the words came.

“ Logs are silent, so are—”

The bird hesitated, turned a beady eye upon Adam, and then croaked out—

“ Fools ! ”

Fatal triumph. The man’s strong hand shot out, seized the mechanical scoffer, and killed it in the same way he killed the fish he caught in the lagoon.

Then he spat out the head on to the grass, flung the fluttering green body angrily away, and turned to face Eve again.

She had felt no horror at the death of her pet. Mad unreasoning anger dispossessed all her other passions, and it was flaring out of her eyes with a far wilder, fiercer flame than that which had smouldered so long in Adam’s. Before he knew what was taking place, she had flung herself upon him, had borne him to the ground, and clung there on the top of him, kicking, scratching, biting like an incarnate fury. She had no remorse, no

restraint over herself. Everything that was tigerish in her nature had come into hot life, and she was doing all that lay in her power to wound and harm. It was not for the bird's sake; it was an unreasoning madness that possessed her, such as can never come to a mind that is under any cultured restraint.

Stunned mentally and physically by the suddenness of her onslaught, Adam lay passive under the first attack; and even when pain brought him sharply to his senses, he was so unconscious of his own superior power, that he did not bring it into use all at once. But as her fury increased—being whet by the sight and smell of blood, one must suppose—so did his resistance strengthen, till at last, locking his arms round her lithe sleek body, with a mighty effort he rolled over and found himself on the top.

Then began retribution. Adam knew nothing of the chivalry which leads one

to spare a fallen enemy, and Eve expected no mercy either, for she writhed and struggled as fiercely as before; for one was quite as great a savage as the other. Adam's evilest passions had hitherto only been aroused against sharks, and so naturally they were relentless. When he was sufficiently wroth he tried to slay—and he usually did slay. He had no idea of moderation in punishment. Heretofore he had acquitted. Now he designed to kill, being far too highly wrought to imagine any middle course. So, regardless of her tearings and scratchings, he clutched Eve's throat with one hand and hit hard and heavily with the other, till she ceased resistance, and lay quite still. And then he showed his superiority over the savage of civilization by maltreating her inanimate form no further. Being unfamiliar with the conditions of unconsciousness, he concluded she was dead; and so feeling his just vengeance justly

satiated, he got up from the body, and went and stood against a tree at a short distance away.

Eve lay on the short turf with her rounded limbs thrown at random, still as the parrot. Her golden hair was spread out on the green like a patch of sunlight. Her face was calm, and not yet disfigured by bruises. She looked as if she were in an ordinary sleep. Almost—not quite. No, there was a difference in this sleep.

Adam stared at his handiwork rather glumly. Her comely body was streaked here and there with blood, which stain, he remembered with a little flash of satisfaction, came from his own veins, and not from hers. She had bitten and scratched—he was marked with red from face to foot in token of it. He had only employed his fist like a leaden weight.

He recollects that he also might have used teeth and talons as well, and was glad now for his forbearance. Indeed, now that it was over, he was sorry for having used his strength upon her at all. But it was only because he should miss her a little as a companion. His conscience did not prick him in the least. With a sense of right and wrong that was new to him, he saw nothing to blame in what he had done. She began by tormenting him; then she attacked him like a fury. The situation had been thrust upon him. It was all her own fault, every bit.

Yet, in spite of this clear argument, Adam felt far from comfortable. He told himself that he had liked Eve much from the very first, and had continued to like her up till the very last moment; and then, with gloomy introspection, he began to find how deeply her memory was still entwined with his life.

And now she was dead, and past recall! At present she looked much as he had always known her, but a horrid change would set in directly. He had killed things before, and knew only too well what happened to a body when vitality had left it. In these hot climates the last alteration soon commences. In a day at the outside Eve would be no longer lovely to look upon. And she was lovely, he told himself. He had never realized it before, but as he gazed now upon her recumbent form, he knew that it was the most beautiful thing his eyes had ever seen.

Adam's trunk and arms were covered with wounds, many of them trickling redly; his head showed angry raw patches where the hair had been uprooted; his features were swollen and distorted: but he seemed conscious of no physical pain. He was shifting his weight restlessly from one leg to the

other, and staring at Eve with knitted brow. He was experiencing the first great grief of his life.

And so he stayed till the sun had dipped behind the tree-tops, and was hovering redly over the distant plain of ocean. There were a few fleecy clouds overhead dyed ruddy with the declining beams, and the reflection from them tinged Eve's pallid limbs with pink. It almost looked as if she were coming to life again. But Adam made up his mind not to be deceived. He knew that she was dead, and with instinctive good taste set about paying last services to her body. Going to the bower, he fetched the tuft-lined coverlet, and came and stood beside her again for one last look. Then he would cover her decently from sight, and go away and leave the glade for ever.

He stooped down to arrange the shroud, when his eye lit upon a fly that had

settled upon her forehead. He shuddered, and groaned aloud. Already!

Then he lowered his hand and brushed the fly away. And then he started back with a great and piercing cry.

She had moved under his touch. She was dead no longer. She was returning to life again, and to him.

He watched and saw her bosom gently pulsing, watched and saw the colour returning to her cheeks—not the reflected pink of the sky, but the tint of generous blood coursing once more through its own proper channels. And then he heard a long-drawn sobbing sigh, and thought it the sweetest music his ears had ever listened to.

She was alive; he had been mistaken: he was not doomed to be alone.

Weak with loss of blood, emotion had sustained him before; and now emotion of another order staggered him. He felt dizzy, faint, and sank to the ground with

everything swimming in circles around him. But he collected himself with an effort, and raised himself upon one hand and gazed at her afresh. The throes of fresh life were passing through her; her limbs were straightening themselves; her eyelids had begun to lift; her lips were moving dryly.

This last sign set Adam's wits working afresh. He was conscious of being thirsty himself: doubtless she was suffering in similar fashion. He started to his feet and tore down to the stream. But he did not drink. The seconds necessary to satisfy his own needs could not be wasted. He drew water in the cup of his two hands, carried it up to where she lay, and let it trickle slowly into her mouth, watching intently for the result. Her lips moved stiffly, as though she were trying to masticate some hard morsel, and she sighed once more, this time with more contentment. He went again for

water, and again and again, always forgetting his own burning needs in his eagerness to serve and revivify her. And at last his care was rewarded. She opened her eyes to the full, and evidently recognized him. He smiled tenderly, feeling almost overcome with gladness. She, on the other hand, frowned, and made a movement—a very slight movement—away from him. He noted it, and becoming eloquent for the first time, bade her have no further fear. He would not injure her again; he deeply regretted what he had done, and made no reference to provocation received. With a clever instinct he owned *mea culpa*, thinking it would please her.

She looked doubtfully at him for awhile, evidently weighing a heavy question in her mind; and then, holding out a languid hand, smiled gently and nodded. He took the proffered member, and kissed her taper fingers as courteously as any

knight of old could have done ; and then, considering the treaty of peace made and signed, bestirred himself for her further welfare. With a tuft of damp moss he gently removed as far as possible all the stains of combat from her body, and then taking her up in his arms, he laid her on the couch of leaves inside the bower, and covered her with the quilt.

Being able to think of no other service to render her, he had turned to go and attend to his own needs, which were pressing, when she called him back. She wanted an orange. Swiftly he sped to the grove across the brook, plucked a couple of yellow spheres, peeling them as he returned. And then, after handing them to her, he rushed off into the woods and ran a mile to another grove where the fruit was finer, and brought a fresh supply which he thought would please her better. She thanked him, and think-

ing of no other wants, bade him go and attend to himself.

Adam went down to the brook and washed and dressed his wounds as well as he was able; and then not feeling equal to a walk to the sea, and the struggles of fishing, he made a vegetarian meal off matter which was to be culled in the immediate neighbourhood. Night had fallen by this, so after that the demands of his appetite were satisfied, he went back to the bower; and finding Eve snuggled up under her quilt, and to all appearances asleep, he lay down too, and was quickly in the land of dreams beside her.

Adam had gone to rest very much in peace with all the world, and he woke up with the same quiet feeling strong in him.

To his surprise and astonishment, the

first thing that fell upon his waking eyes was Eve's figure creeping stealthily out of the door.

His first impulse was to call after her; yet he not only stifled this, but also, when she got outside and turned again to look at him, he shut his eyes again and feigned sleep. His action was, as it were, half involuntary, and he himself was surprised by it. Indeed, he had almost a mind to get up there and then and follow her. But Eve's movements had been so peculiar, that he resolved to wait for the present where he was and not interfere with her.

The walls of the bower were gapped in places, and looking through the trellis of wands and flowers, he could often catch a glimpse of her. She was walking hither and thither, across and across the glade, apparently in search of something. Again Adam had half a mind to go out and assist her in her quest. But again he

restrained himself with the thought that if she had wanted his assistance, she would not have scrupled to have awakened him and asked for it. So he continued to watch unobtrusively. Presently she stooped and picked up a large sharp-edged bivalve shell, and then a short length of heavy stick. Dropping them again for a moment, she came once more to the opening of the bower, and saw Adam to appearances fast asleep. So she turned again, and plucking a thin flexible liane, sat herself down on the turf.

Adam watched her movements curiously. She proceeded with much care to snip small fragments from the shell near its hinged end, and then taking the liane, lashed it firmly on to the handle.

She was making an axe. He had never seen one before, but he guessed its use, and began to have a foreboding of the purpose to which it was intended to be put. So he continued to lie still

and watch, waiting the development of events.

At last Eve had completed her weapon, and rose again to her feet. She swung it viciously through the air a time or two, and then smiling a cruel quiet smile, moved stealthily towards the bower.

The roof was not high enough to admit her standing upright, and so she entered, crawling with cat-like caution, upon her hands and knees. She was a little stiff from the struggle of the day before, but in no way materially injured, and she felt possessed of ample strength to fulfil her purpose. Adam was asleep. She could strike without danger to herself, and he would not know whence the fatal blow came till after it had fallen.

She knelt beside him and raised the clumsy weapon above her head with both hands, fixing her glance upon the spot she intended to strike, a tiny mole that grew in the very centre of his forehead.

The rude axe was poised on high, and in another moment would have fallen. But of a sudden the sleeping man sprang up endowed with full wakefulness, and with a shriek she turned and fled, dropping the axe to the ground in her terror.

Adam grasped its handle as he sprang to his feet and followed. Her treachery had aroused all the evil spirit in him again, and the *lex talionis* was naturally the code by which he would judge her if he could come near enough. But Eve was fleeter of foot, and he expected her to escape.

Eve thought, too, that her wild flight would carry her away from his clutches, but she had not reckoned upon accidents. She had hardly gained one of the winding forest paths at the other side of the glade, when her foot caught on a projecting root, and she stumbled and almost fell. Before she could recover speed, he was close upon her. Expecting no mercy,

she turned, cat-like and defiant, standing back against a tall palm, with body bent, and one arm sheltering her face.

Adam stood before her with axe upraised. He was very much inclined to slay, and he judged that she deserved her fate most thoroughly; but remembering his recent experience, he stayed his hand in mid-air, and hesitated.

They stood there panting and glaring at one another like a pair of wild beasts; and the minutes flew by, and neither made a movement.

At last Adam's mind was made up. He would beat her with a weapon that would sting indeed, but do no deadly injury, and turned away to tear down a stick suitable for his purpose.

The moment was Eve's opportunity. Facing round, she ran up the rough surface of the tree-stem nimbly as a squirrel, mocking him with words and laughter as she went.

She had deceived him again—circumvented him when the game lay in his own hands. Adam's rage boiled up afresh, and he tried to follow. He had never climbed a palm before, but fury aided him now, and he got twenty feet from the ground. But there a great shell peeled off under his weight, and he fell back heavily on to the turf.

Eve had been silent whilst she saw him attempting the ascent, and was making fierce preparations to resist his landing. But when, from her perch, she beheld his overthrow, she mocked him afresh—mocked and laughed till she was hoarse—feeling sure that she was safe, since Adam could not possibly get at her. Moreover, she hoped that if she kept on lashing him with her tongue, he would get tired of the one-sided conflict, and go away and rid her of his presence, when she would have opportunity to discover some snugger retreat.

But Adam had no intention of even tacitly owning that he was beaten. He was very hurt both in mind and body, and he intended to see the thing out to a conclusion either one way or another. So he sat him down by the foot of the tree, saying nothing, but biding his time. There were plantains close at hand to supply his needs, and he could stay there a month if necessary, till she was starved out.

She might laugh, but he would win.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER RECOUNTS
A NECESSARY RECONCILIATION.

LIKE some general of the olden days, when Adam found that he could not take his fortress at first escalade, he sat down before it, intending to starve the garrison into surrender. And he reflected that although the process of siege might not be a pleasant one for him, it would be vastly uncomfortable for Eve. He had tried starvation himself once, and so could picture her sufferings that were to be. So he replied not to the gibings which were lavishly hurled down upon him at first, but crouched there with elbows on his knees, biting his thumbs, and deciding to slay her the moment she

capitulated ; and after she had shouted and laughed all her voice away, and was reduced to silence, he still continued the same occupation.

In this amiable frame of mind Adam passed the day ; breakfasting, lunching, and dining off plantains *au naturel*—a fare which he loathed—but never wavering from his guard. Eve he couldn't see, as she was hidden by the tremulous foliage which crowned the stem ; but even after she had ceased giving mouth he knew she was there, for the palm stood alone, and there was no way of escape except by flying, and he was pretty sure she lacked the power of flight, or he would have found it out before. She was fond enough of showing what she could do, as he remembered bitterly.

The morning passed ; the afternoon burnt itself through, hot and scorching ; the evening shadows closed in ; the sunset and its after-glow died away, and

night fell cool and velvety: and still Adam sentinelled the tree-foot. If he had thought soberly about the matter, he would have remembered that little idiosyncrasy of Eve's which caused her to assume the position of the chased ostrich during the hours of darkness, and have known that she would make no attempt to change her position before sunrise. But his mind was occupied by matters far too weighty for a small item like this to venture intrusion upon its notice. And so throughout the night-watches he crouched wakefully in his form, brooding over many and great wrongs.

All night long Adam gnawed his thumbs, and kept his wrath well nourished; and as he got more tired with watching, so did his savageness increase. His eyes blinked redly at the dawn as it hazed through the tree-tops, and when the morning mists melted away and the burning tropical day burst into full glow,

he was fain to drop his head, and cover his face with a hand. The glare pained him.

Being a man accustomed to much sleep, the next effect of this long period of wakefulness may be guessed at. Unconsciously he shifted his position, leaning one elbow on the ground; and as drowsiness grew, so did his body bend lower and lower, till one shoulder touched the sod; and then he dropped off to rest in a few seconds. The whole thing was done in a minute. In fact, he never knew that he had fallen asleep at all, for directly afterwards a yell of surprise and pain was forced out of him, and he found himself on his feet.

Eve, masked in her vantage-point above, had been on the look-out, and when she saw him doze off she plucked an old ripe nut, stripped it of the fibrous husk, and then poising it for a moment in her hand, hurled it at Adam's head with murderous

intent. She was, as has been mentioned, skilled beyond the rest of her sex in the matter of aim, and the throw was a throw which would have done credit to any one. Had that hard woody mass hit its mark, Adam's skull would have been smashed in like an egg—as she intended. But a trifle of wind altered its trajectory, and missing his crown by a hand's-breadth, it sank a foot into the ground, pinning some score of stray hairs beneath it. Like a shot from an air-gun the missile made but little noise, and if his head had been close cropped, Adam would have slept on, and Eve might have found better fortune with a second attempt; but as it was, he awoke instantly to a sense of the situation.

The sequence may be a little unexpected. His mind, as if rusty, moved on with a jerk. Of a sudden Adam feared, and so he fled; and the field was left to his antagonist.

Eve was prompt to grasp the outcome, and to take advantage of it. Adam had fled away like a bird whose feathers her missile had ruffled, and for a while he would continue his flight. Then finding himself unhurt, he would, she thought, as likely as not come back again. And so having no wish to be pinned longer amongst the comfortless fronds of the palm, which made but a desperate fortress, she slipped nimbly to the ground, and made off with speed in the direction opposite to that which Adam had taken.

From time to time she stopped and listened for pursuit, but never being certain that footsteps were not following her—for the forest was full of noises—she went on and on again, doubling and redoubling along the narrow crooked paths, for a long time without any settled direction.

Life was very sweet to her, and she was in desperate fear of losing it. Adam,

she felt sure, would slay if he came up; and a faint voice within told her that he would be perfectly right in doing so if he got the chance. So instinctively she ran, till she could run no more.

Then, as she sank to the ground through sheer exhaustion, it suddenly dawned upon her that as she was entirely ignorant of Adam's whereabouts, she might have been moving directly towards him most of the time—running after him—advancing to meet him face to face. She might even be close to him then!

The thought urged her to her feet once more, and she looked around her like a hunted animal, anxious to move further, wondering which road to take. But to whatever point she faced, she saw in fancy Adam close at hand. The feeling was terrible; and she grew still more frightened. So she sank down again, and covering her face with her hands,

sobbed and sobbed till she nearly choked herself, and—laid the foundations of a partial repentance. She was not sorry for having tried to murder Adam, mind. Indeed she deeply and consciously regretted having failed. But she was sorry for having irritated him that extra trifle in the first instance, and brought about retaliation on the parrot, and all the other chain of ills to herself which had been consequent upon it.

Even inanimate nature conspired against Eve in that black hour to add to her terrors. The trees crackled in imitation of Adam's crashing unhunter-like footsteps, and the bushes brushed their foliage together as though he was recklessly pressing through them. And ever and anon some bird would reproduce some of his whistlings so exactly, that she would leap to her feet again, and fly from the sound as though her enemy himself were in full sight.

And so the day wore through, and every time Eve had rested long enough to gain a little strength, she was ruthlessly forced up to her feet by some alarm of her own fancy, and driven on through the woods till exhaustion got the upper hand, and dragged her down again. And in time night drew on and added to her torments. Every shade that moved was Adam's; every crackle of the shrubs betrayed his tread; every sigh of the wind was redolent of his breath. And phantoms drove her up into a tree, where she cowered till daybreak.

And so with the succeeding days and nights, till at the end of a week the erstwhile comely Eve was comely no longer. Her sleek body was scratched, and bruised, and angular; her golden hair was matted like a sod, and bristled with coarse gleanings from the forest; her rounded limbs had developed hills and dales which were filthy with earth

and blood; and her face had on it a hunted expression, which, when she happened to glance at it whilst drinking from a pool, scared even herself.

It was a wild fearful penance: and what was worse, she saw no chance of bringing it to a close. She almost wished Adam would come upon her—suddenly, and when she was not looking—and bring her sufferings to a close, quickly and without pain. But the details of execution were too abhorrent to her pleasure-loving nature for her to voluntarily seek him and offer her neck before his hand. She was certain he would kill her, but she feared he would do it slowly, painfully, cruelly. She judged him by herself.

And now let us turn away from this sweet heroine, and glance at our noble hero.

Spurred by that sudden scare, Adam ran back along the path to the glade where the bower was, and then stopped. Having collected his wits a trifle, he remembered that no immediate danger pressed on his heels, and that therefore he had no need of hurry. His vigil had made him so terribly sleepy that a constant effort was needed to support his eyelids. He felt that he could not keep awake much longer. Yet, if he dropped off to sleep, he was morally certain that Eve would contrive to assassinate him. Twice he had narrowly escaped; the third time he felt he was doomed to succumb; and this destroys a man's nerve. She was so infernally cunning and clever. To him, her inventive power seemed boundless. He had no notion in what way the blow would fall, but was certain that it would come from a point whence he expected it least.

And every minute drowsiness was

getting a greater hold upon him. The feeling was horrible.

Adam looked around him and groaned. The whole island, so far as he could remember, contained no harbour of refuge for him. Wherever he hid, Eve with her cat-like tread would be able to stalk him down, and strike a mortal blow on his most unguarded side. Why, he reiterated to himself, had he ever left his own demesne? He was always snug there, and secure; and even if she had known of his cave and wanted to get at it, she could not do so if the place had been eight yards away instead of eight miles.

But there his drowsy maundering soliloquy of regret abruptly halted, for it had suggested a scheme which would serve his purpose for the present. Some half-mile away from the coast of Eve's territory was a small barren rock, built up by the coral polyps from the floor of the lagoon, and projecting but a few



inches above its surface. On it he would be safe. A merciful providence had withheld from Eve all powers of natation.

So down to the beach he sped, and plunging into the element he knew so well, ferried himself over to the place of refuge.

Despite the dangers of the way, he was half dozing during the second part of the passage, and swam mechanically, escaping the sharks by a miracle ; and on landing, just dragged himself on to the jagged honey-combed surface and relapsed on the moment into unconsciousness. The sun was pouring furnace-breath directly down on to him, and the sea was as brass around. His skin, toughened by exposure though it was, reddened and burnt under the fierce heat. But he felt it not ; he was not even uneasy in his sleep. He had sunk into the complete oblivion of utter exhaustion.

And meanwhile Eve was flying through

her coverts, hearing his footsteps close upon her heels at every turn !

Night came, and still Adam slept ; and night passed. Another morning had grown out of its first youth before he awoke. And then he began to appreciate the miseries of his new situation. The seas around him teemed with life ; but he was forced to eat his fish raw. He had learnt how to replenish a fire, but his education had not advanced to lighting one ; so that, even if his lodging was on the main shore, with plenty of fuel at hand, he would have been in no better plight. So he ate sparingly ; for after the more cultured experience of the last month and a half, he had come to look upon raw fish much as you or I should. Still, after a fashion, hunger could be satisfied from where he was. But not so thirst ; for though it raged like a fever, he could not drink a drop from the water around him. And so he was

compelled to swim off to the shore, and having no offensive stake wherewith to defend himself, landed with a jagged bleeding wound all down his right fore-arm. For the sharks swarmed ; and they were both savage and strong.

Adam drank his fill at the brook—the same brook which he had tasted on first coming to these shores—and then sat down for awhile, almost determined to brave it out where he was, and not to risk a return. But his courage, under the continual drains that were made upon it, gradually failed him. His fancy warned him of Eve's approach from a score of different points, and would not let him rest. He was on the constant *qui vive*. His eyes were no sooner focussed on the shadows of one waving bush, than something would cause him to turn with a start towards an entirely different direction. He was brave enough when he landed, but this constant dread sapped

his pluck, and made his knees and all his joints to tremble.

So at last he gathered a couple of sticks, pointed them with his teeth, and returned to his solitary rock. There at any rate she could not haunt him.

But though Eve's influence could not extend across the belt of water, there were plenty of other discomforts to compensate for the lack of it, and still make his life a burdensome one. The rock, as has been said, was not a lofty one. In fact it was only one degree removed from a shoal, and occasionally it seemed attempting a retrogression to this lowlier stage. Though tides never altered the level of the seas amongst this group of islets, the winds often did; and when on the third day of his residence on the rock a gale sprung up, Adam found that his resting-place was for the greater part of the time completely under water.

He bore it stoically enough for a time, being well used to the lashings of the sea; but at length it began to be vastly uncomfortable. The surges creamed over him continually, the spindrift from the tops of the waves cut his bare body like nettle-stings, and he had to cling desperately to the honey-combed coral to prevent being swept bodily away. Besides, being exposed to wind and water alternately, the cold bit him keenly.

But what was worse, he could not escape from it; could not get over to the brook to drink. The seas ran high at this end of the lagoon, and though he could have swum through them, he could not have warded against the attacks of sharks at the same time, and their fierceness has no regard for the state of the weather. So he had to stay, and be pickled with brine, and still further mortify his flesh upon leathery limpets

for three whole days; at the end of which period the gale broke.

He went ashore too dispirited for further care of his safety. If Eve would let him alone, so much the better. If she wanted to kill him, well, he supposed she would do it. He was very sorry for himself, but the thing could not be helped. So with a recklessness for consequences begotten of past suffering, he satisfied as well as could be the needs of his belly, and then entered the forest in search of a comfortable camp. He reflected with some grimness that there was no need to hide himself very deeply, as Eve could find him anywhere if she set about doing it in earnest. And, besides, he rather wished matters to be settled one way or the other, being very tired of suspense.

He stopped first in a banana-clump, whose tender green leaves, torn to ribands by the gale, hung in tremulous

fringes almost to the ground. But a monitor lizard, a big chap five feet long, scuttled away at his approach, and he did not like monitor lizards—uncooked. So he went on a score or so of yards further, flung himself down amid a thicket of aromatic ferns, and—incontinently went to sleep. He was very worn-out.

How many hours passed blissfully away in unconsciousness he knew not; but the sun was still on high when he woke. Perhaps it was another day: he could not tell. But it seemed to him that some noise had roused him, so he lay still for awhile and listened. All was silence, save for the cooing of a couple of gay-plumaged pigeons in a tree close at hand, and the hum of insect life which always hung in the woods. He was on the point of deciding that the disturbing noise emanated from dreamland alone, when it recommenced again. It was a voice—

a human voice—Eve's. And she was close to him !

In that moment Adam was thrilled with a good many different emotions. One was that he could get up and kill her there and then, since fate had delivered her into his hand. Another was that he had missed her society desperately of late.

She kept on talking, and as the words came to his ear, he heard that they all referred to himself. So he lay quiet, and made no movement.

Now when a lady happens to be soliloquizing aloud, it is very bad form to listen to her, especially if you find that you yourself are forming the subject of her thoughts. But luckily this was a nicety of etiquette which Adam had yet to learn. I say luckily, for as Eve's diatribe went on, Adam's spirit changed within him, and the last of the lust for murder died finally away. Eve was pitying him ! Not a tithe so much as she

was pitying herself, it is true, but still she grieved that he should have suffered, and such pity was new to him. Something within him swelled up till he felt that he must almost cry aloud for relief. But he restrained himself, and listened on. Eve was still bewailing her misfortunes, regretting that she had ever irritated or risen against him, and wishing that he would come up and put an end to her griefs and sufferings—so that he did it swiftly, and without causing her pain.

Adam rose to his feet.

Eve looked up, attracted by the silky rustling of the ferns—such a piteous dishevelled Eve! But she made no movement to rise or escape. She was paralyzed with astonishment and terror, and all she could do was to stare round-eyed.

For a full minute Adam returned her gaze. He did not know what to say, for words never came kindly to him; and being very gaunt and unpleasant to the

eye, his looks did not reassure her, although he intended that they should do so. But at last he noted that she was gradually recovering from the shock of his appearance, and was gathering herself up for a spring. In another moment she would have darted off into woody fastnesses, past recall. So he said a word which stopped her. It was the only word anything approaching endearment which he knew—and of its meaning he was rather vague—but some indefinable instinct told him that it would serve his purpose then, so he said it, and saw success.

Eve's look of terror passed slowly away. He pressed through the heavy-scented ferns which divided them, and sat on the ground by her side. And she said other words, and threw her arms around his neck. And so they were reconciled.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER NARRATES
HOW EVE GREW SICK.

THE pair did not return to honeymoon terms again after that reconciliation. The first charm of companionship had worn itself away ; they knew each other's good points pretty accurately, and each other's failings with much thoroughness, as a couple do after a month's *tête-à-tête* ; and so they settled down to a steadier and less delirious enjoyment of life.

In view of their past differences, and the mutual suffering entailed by their primeval style of argument, each gave in to the other a good deal ; but Adam gave in most. Eve's wilier mind enabled her

to enjoy the lazier existence. She knew that so long as she kept Adam in good humour, he would do most things for her. So she studiously avoided ruffling him: she never commanded, or ridiculed, or satirized, or tormented him in any way whatever. Instead, she invented the art of flattery.

If modified according to taste, all men are pervious to this, from prime minister to ploughboy. They prefer it delicate or otherwise, according as it is an old experience to them or an uncommon one.

Broad effects naturally suited Adam's unscholared temperament best: and so he got them, laid on with something longer than a palette-knife—a trowel for instance. In return he allowed himself to be constituted baker, fishmonger, fruiterer and greengrocer to the community, and also officiated as occasional lady's-maid without the ghost of a grumble.

This gentle titillation of her companion's sense of vanity was no trouble to Eve. Indeed it pleased her to see him pleased, for she was fond of him. And as he had constituted himself purveyor of most things needful, thereby saving her much labour, she was yet further pleased, for she was still fonder of herself. For you see that though Eve was active enough, and quite ready to do everything for herself, when she was a spinster and living on her own resources, she now rather affected the *grande parvenue*, and was fully alive to the indignity of labour —which either speaks ill of her sex in general, or shows the taint of some strong heredity.

Let it not be understood though that Eve led a life of complete idleness. There were some things that Adam could not do. He could not have captured a bird to save his life. He threw missiles like the

average girl does—she throwing, as has been said, like an ultra-expert man; and so when fowl was needed for a roast, it was a Diana's work to capture it, and not a Nimrod's. And similarly with gathering cocoa-nuts. Since that memorable first attempt Adam had contrived to gain the crest of more than one lofty palm, for he was a dogged sort of person in his way, and did not like to be beaten at a thing when once he set his mind to it. But he was not expert at it. To climb tall branchless stems, an apprenticeship to the trade must be commenced in very early life; and this Adam had missed. And though by sheer brute force he had contrived to make a few ascents, they constantly involved him in tumbles, all of which damaged him more or less. So after a while, Eve, even in his most willing moods, gave up suggesting that he should go and pluck cocoa-nuts for her;

and when they were wanted, went and gathered them herself. The trouble was small, and if Adam got badly damaged by any of his reckless falls, it would entail far more labour for her to patch him up into health again.

I mention this subject of cocoa-nut-palms especially, as from those generous trees they obtained many things of ordinary use—food, bed-quilt, building materials—and one other thing, which formed their chiefest luxury. A boring made above one of the lower and annular rings, and penetrating into the sieve-tubes, tapped what seemed to the pleasure-loving mind of Eve, who had accidentally discovered it, a veritable fountain of delight. In a word, she had discovered palm-wine, a beverage which Adam appreciated as much as she did herself.

Boring living wood with wood, or even with a jagged fragment of stone, is at the

best but a slow process ; and it entails heavy manual labour, of which Eve was not fond. But with a mixture of caution and cunning she thought it wise to keep the key of the liquor in her own hands, and so she always did this work herself, and never disclosed to Adam the mystery of the brew ; that being the primitive equivalent for taking out a patent. And so as its production was attended with severe physical toil for herself, the strong drink did not appear on the bill of fare with palling frequency, and thus was appreciated to the full when it was there.

As a general thing Eve drew her supplies from the smaller trees, where the sap was nearer the periphery, and so entailed less delving for ; but occasionally, when a desire for heavier libations seized upon her, she would attack some giant whose feathery top towered full sixty or seventy feet above her, and draw from it

a good three gallons of liquor. This would remain exposed to the sun, fermenting in a big natural punch-bowl of shell, and then she would carry it back to the glade, and invite Adam to join her in a glorious debauch.

She had not cared much for this form of dissipation when she had the island all to herself; but now, with a companion, it seemed to her, when it did come occasionally, to be the height of bliss. They would sit *vis-à-vis* with the great mollusk shell between them, and drink in turn, and beam on one another pleasantly. They knew that the spirit within them would begin to work if it was given time. Soon Eve would commence to sing, and then Adam's rusty tongue would wag, becoming more fluent with the depths of his potations. And then their heels would start itching, and they would get up in the hot sunshine and dance

with their own squat shadows, and dance with one another, in madly joyous bacchanalian orgie. And so they would go on till the tide in the great shell had ebbed to its mother-o'-pearl lining, and then they would retire to their leafy couches, and sink peacefully into slumber.

Next morning the bill would be presented in the form of headaches more or less splitting according to the amount of palm-wine partaken of. Eve would look heavy about the eyes, unkempt as to the hair, and generally limp in body; and she would complain of a bad taste in her mouth, and make a good many journeys down to the brook, presumably to wash this out. Also she would be excessively snappy and cross with anything, animate or inanimate, which came athwart her vision. Adam took matters more philosophically. He reasoned things out, and saw that he had nothing to complain of.

The liquor had been excellent, and the fun of drinking it immense. He had had a grand dance with Eve, and had distinct reason for pride when he remembered his unwonted fluency of tongue. In every way the pleasures of tipsyness were superior to the joys derived from a surfeit of those red-finned fish with the vari-coloured backs, which at one time constituted his sole positive enjoyment and luxury. Also the cost for candles had cheapened. The new after-penance —headache and bad mouth—were not to be compared with the old stabbings of dyspepsia which those rainbow-hued monstrosities demanded; for whilst the morning's swim only had the effect of further irritating this last, it would entirely eradicate all trace of his overnight indulgences now. So Adam knew that he was in luck's way, and thought Eve rather a fool for making a fuss about trifles.

But it was not often that Adam was called upon to make these wholesale analyses of his companion's character and his own. As has been said, Eve did not provide the wherewith for one of these debauches on the heavy scale very often. She had various reasons for the omission, but beyond mentioning that the chiefest of them all was certainly laziness, they need none of them be discussed here.

And so their life went on for a year and a half, in a groove with no gaps and few curvings.

Their needs were so far only material ones, and these were easily appeased. The land was smiling, the water of the lagoon teemed with life: these supplied everything they knew enough to want. They ate, they chatted, they slept; occasionally they drank together heavily,

and paid their several penances, which had been deliberately earned ; and occasionally they nagged, sometimes even to the stage of strife. But never, to their credit be it said—or to the credit of Eve's recipe for palm-punch—never did they fall out over their cups. Inebriety to them was no more a sin than is the enjoyment of a bank holiday to the staidest of elderly clerks. They merely wanted a little excitement—change—pleasure—to leaven the meal of their daily existence, and prevent it settling down into something that was dry and unpalatable and indigestible.

But at the end of those eighteen months a change commenced to dawn over the scene.

Lazy Eve began to grow more lazy still. She would move listlessly from her bower to the mossy bank outside, and back again a time or two, but beyond

this take no exercise whatever. She had by degrees lessened the frequency of her hunting excursions, till at last she ceased going out into the forests for food altogether. If Adam brought in sufficient fish for two, it was well; and she ate some. If he grumbled at always having a double share of work to do—as he did when more than nine-tenths of the household labours were foisted upon his shoulders for many days together—again well; she said she wasn't hungry. Let him look after himself; she was all right, and she didn't want to be bothered.

At this he would stare, for Eve, ever since he had known her, had always played a very good trencher hand; and he would stare still more when he relented and gave her food, and saw her pick it over daintily, and eat only bits here and there, and that without gusto or relish. Indeed Eve was surprised at herself, and

not a little alarmed also, as one must necessarily be when a hitherto healthy appetite dwindleth down towards the vanishing point. Her neglect of exercise since Adam's appearance had been induced simply and solely by sloth, she told herself; but more than sloth ailed her now.

Never having had a day's sickness in her life, the very existence of ill-health was unknown to her; much less its intrusion into human economies. And the present phase of affairs being strange and hurtful, naturally terrified her. Every night she rolled herself up underneath the cotton-lined quilt with hopes of waking next morning in full rude health as of yore. But none of the mornings showed an improvement; and as sleep would frequently forsake her during the hours of darkness, she was often able to note progress between-whiles—a progress which was usually towards the worse.

She made no direct complaint to Adam about the ailment, her vocabulary having, as has been said, but narrow limits, and her powers of paraphrase in this instance failing her completely. But Adam, like many non-talkative men, had grown to use his eyes pretty freely, and he saw that Eve was not her usual self, without being more directly told about the fact. He could not diagnose her complaint. Indeed, like Eve herself, never having studied any illness, it was the utmost he could do to arrive at the abstract notion of discomfort such as would be produced by, say, eating those abominable red-finned monstrosities day after day without intermission. But that complaint could be cured at once by leaving the irritant alone, whilst this seemed of a totally different nature. The relationship between the two was hard to trace, and, sooth to say, unsatisfactory when he had

arrived at it. And by degrees, as the days went on without seeing any improvement, Adam began to feel vaguely guilty towards Eve herself; though he reflected, with a gloomy sort of satisfaction, that if his surmise was correct, she was infinitely more to blame than he.

And Eve, too, commenced to have her own ideas on the subject, but as they puzzled even herself, and assumed no very definite form, she could not impart them to Adam.

That she might die did not occur to either of them. Apart from a violent one, death had for them no existence. Of course they saw the animals around them stricken down by natural causes now and then; but it never dawned upon them that they too were animal, and must one day cease to breathe. Such a theory would want a wonderful lot of working out if one had no examples to

draw from. So they decided that Eve might get better, or worse ; or that her health might remain stationary, or that she might get well ; and in the meanwhile all they could do was to wait and watch the course of events.

But in spite of this view Adam was troubled ; and so was Eve, for her malady was painful.

Adam's nature was not one which inclined to useless (and cheap) verbal condolences. His sympathy took a far more practical form. He set himself to do all the work of the community without a murmur, and attended to all Eve's wants as well as he could. She was querulous and fretful, but he was stolid and refused to take offence, which at times she would remember and appreciate. His kindness might be wooden, but it was very solid and satisfactory.

At last a climax came.

Adam had been away down at the lagoon, fishing according to his old simple methods, and spending the whole morning in collecting a sufficiency of prey. He had got what he wanted at last, and was returning, carrying his catch in a rude basket of palm-s swathes, an invention of which he was not a little proud, as well he might be, seeing that he had made it all himself from a pattern evolved from his inner consciousness alone. He was returning, I say, from his coverts, swinging the basket by his side, and whistling thoughtfully; and he had walked across the glade, and come to the entrance of the bower.

But there the creel of fish dropped with a thud on to the turf, and burst unnoticed; and his knees drooped and shook; and his lank black hair, still moist and sticky with brine, began to

ripple in erecting waves all over his scalp.

Eve was not alone as he had left her. She had a little red fleshy something locked in her arms, a something that was alive, a something that was giving vent to shrill cries. No wonder the poor fellow was utterly aghast.

THE NINTH CHAPTER POINTS OUT
THE INFLUENCE OF CAIN.

CAIN's intrusion was not without its drawbacks. He was a querulous urchin, with powerful lungs, and with no delicacy or scruple about using them. Adam liked to hear Eve talk, for her voice was musical ; but Cain's method of expressing ideas aloud annoyed him, and he let the same be plainly known. The child was Eve's—not his—and he looked to Eve to manage it. No, he could give no suggestion. It was not to be supposed that he knew about such matters. She didn't know how to proceed ? He was very sorry ; he could not help that ; but he

advised her to find out, or possibly trouble would arise in the island.

This attitude of her husband's annoyed Eve, for she thought it unreasonable. Cain's squallings did not grate on her ear particularly. Indeed, if the little angel wished to take recreation in that noisy way, she was glad to let him do it; for being satisfied in her own mind that the child lacked nothing, she regarded its shrill pipings as merely an orthodox childish accessory.

Maternal instinct had taught Eve a good many things; but its tuition was a trifle incomplete, and no other teacher was available. She suckled Cain as naturally as if she had been the mother of ten other children already; but of many of his other babyish needs she was blissfully ignorant. When he had satisfied his appetite, she would lay him down on the moss, or grass, or wherever she

happened to be, and gloat over him whether he squalled, or whether he cooed, or whether he slept. She coined the word “treasure,” and applied it to him at all periods, seasonable or otherwise.

Adam, on the other hand, found Cain endurable only when he was asleep. Then he would gaze upon him intently for hours together, with a curious silent wonder which never seemed to grow less; but directly the child started into life and noise again, Adam’s wonder was submerged in irritation and annoyance. Squalling was such a useless occupation; it could do the little brute no earthly good; and it jarred upon his (Adam’s) nerves most infernally.

Once and once only did he raise his hand against the child, and the occasion was an understandable one. Cain was lamenting boisterously over the advent of his first tooth; and Eve, who did not

know that teeth came to a baby as eyesight does to a puppy, offered no comfort. Adam was taking a well-earned midday siesta after a hard morning's work, rolling restlessly from side to side in the endeavour to sleep. But the maddening soloist refused to let him even doze.

He endured it like a hero for some time, but at last his stoicism and patience came to an end. He rose to his elbow. The baby, some dozen yards away, was lying on his back with hot purple face and roundly distended mouth, shrieking out its unmelodious notes till the still air around fairly trembled.

Adam warned it to desist, but the child squalled on. He warned it again, warned it thrice, without being obeyed ; and the mother looked on indolently.

Then Adam got up, moved across the intervening space, and lifted his fist. There was a quick upspringing of a

lissome form near at hand, and as the blow—a light one—descended, it fell upon Eve, who had interposed her own sleek shoulder to catch it.

Adam drew back a pace. Eve faced him, panting; and for a minute neither spoke. Then Adam said quietly, “You fool,” and took himself off; and Eve lifted the child in her arms, and attempted to soothe it.

Adam left the glade, and went and sat himself down in a quiet place. He had learnt something, though what it was he could scarcely define. There had been a look upon Eve’s face which would have made him think twice about meddling with her, even had he meditated doing so. He had seen something like it once before—when she sprang on him, after he had killed her parrot. Her eyes glinted with a fierce fire then, it is true; but the sombre fury that glowed from their blue

depths when she had shielded the child was by far more dangerous. He had felt no wit afraid. Indeed, now that he thought the matter over coolly, he admired her pluck, for she had good reason to know how superior was his strength when it came to a hand-to-hand scuffle. And so he thought and thought, and finally went back to the glade with a peace-offering of fruit, and a consciousness within him that that noisy little imp Cain must be worth something after all.

Eve was not more fond of her infant son after this *fracas* in which she had earned a blow on his behalf, for that was impossible; but she paid a great deal more attention to his welfare, and in consequence the shrill discords of his voice came to be more rarely heard. Cain ceased to employ all the intervals of time when he was neither sleeping nor eating in the exercise of his vocal powers. Eve

had somehow or other contrived to instil into his infantine brain that such a proceeding carried with it an element of danger which it was unadvisable to neglect. But for all that when certain woes, real or imaginary, came into his existence, no human power of persuasion could repress those frantic squallings.

At these times Adam would stand it as long as he could, and then, with some aboriginal substitute for swearing, betake himself off to a spot which served him as a club; and when he was safely out of the way, if Cain still persisted in his clamorous outcry, Eve would apply the corrective hand to that part of his anatomy which most invited spanking.

And so as he grew in months, Master Cain became a more reasonable member of society, and his father began by degrees to give up fulminating his often-repeated (but never carried out) threat of

going over to the other extremity of the island, and setting up an establishment there all by himself. Indeed, he even went so far as one day to observe to Eve that her old bower had grown too small for the demands that were now made upon it, and to suggest building a more commodious one. As she was delighted at the idea, he got up and set about the construction there and then, sticking to the old lines more or less, but branching out into novelties for the details.

This whetted his invention, or else awoke other long dormant instincts within him, and he made vessels out of gourd and calabash and cocoa-nut, axes and knives out of wood and sharp-edged shell, and then set about filling up his spare time by carving various cabalistic designs on the posts of his new home, and upon any other piece of timber that caught his eye. His carvings were rude, though

not without some barbaric beauty and quaintness, and they interested him much. He had been an idle man before, for the greater part of his time; but now with an occupation which was truly artistic (seeing that it was eminently useless) to fill in his leisure hours, he unconsciously used his brain more, and so developed it further. He learnt to see past the day he was then living; for these carvings would endure till to-morrow, and the day after that, and the day after, and so on and on to what seemed to him countless time. But he did not take this glimpse into the future too often then. The vastness of the prospect bewildered him. It was too wide a jump to venture upon all at once. It was necessary for him to look one day ahead first, and get thoroughly accustomed to its closer vista, before he ventured upon the longer flight.

He came to doing this by imperceptible

degrees. Heretofore it had been the cheerful primitive custom of the establishment to provide for each day as they woke up into it, and to consume all supplies whether they wanted them or not, and to leave all surplus to waste. But Adam discovered that it was quite possible to make one journey to the best banana clump, which was a mile and a half away, do for a week. He could carry a couple of clusters of the buff-coated fruit, and they would improve by keeping rather than spoil, if hung up and not allowed to rot upon the ground. And he also expounded to Eve that if she had killed one good-sized bird, and on her homeward journey managed to merely wound another, so that it fell into her clutches, it was advisable not to give the second its *coup de grâce* till she saw that it was wanted. He himself might have brought a large store of fish, and so the

second bird would be superfluous. If dead it would quickly go bad; if alive it would last over to the next day: which was cruel but practical. But as Eve had no tender scruples about matters of this kind, she acted on his advice, and admired his cleverness in thinking of such a thing. She was quite ready to accept and act up to improvements, but hers was no head for inventing anything beyond what she knew already.

By the time these things had been brought about, Cain had grown well out of babyhood, and had taken kindly to hard food. Eve had again assumed the *rôle* of teacher of languages, and found her pupil fairly apt. By the time that he was a year old, he learnt that if he asked for a thing articulately, he usually got it; but that if he couched his plea in inarticulate howlings, the only tangible thing he obtained was corporal correction. So

being a sensible child, Cain soon learned to do what suited his feelings and general welfare best.

Up to this period he had been most distinctly "his mother's boy." The only notice Adam usually took of him, was to curse and get out of the way when he squalled. But when Master Cain could toddle about on his own legs, and behave himself more like a reasonable member of society, then his father ceased to regard him as he would have done an ungreased cart-wheel, and began to pay more flattering attention to him. Indeed, he commenced to take a distinct interest in his existence, for Cain increased in stature almost visibly at that early stage of his career; and Adam, being utterly without previous experience in such matters, fancied that this his son would in a very short space of time grow to be as big and strong as himself.

That initiated Adam's first glimpse into politics.

Turning over the pages of his experience, he told himself for the first time that a community could not exist for long without some one obtaining the headship. It was practically upon this issue that he and Eve had fought. Their battling had not been very decisive, but his superior force had sufficiently demonstrated itself to deter her from a second resort to physical argument. He gave way to her frequently, and on many points, it is true; but only out of complaisance. When he stated openly and decisively that he intended to have his own way, he had it, without demur. His supremacy lay upon Eve lightly, but none the less he could pose as supreme ruler when he chose.

And now the number of his subjects had increased from one to a couple; and

subject number two would, so he thought, if allowed to expand freely, soon grow to be his father's equal, if not his superior in point of physical strength, and would be in a position to struggle for the supremacy.

So that Adam was no sooner conscious of his right to wear a kingly crown, than he commenced to feel some of the uneasiness inseparable from sovereignty. Wherefore he came to look upon Cain with anxious eye.

Moreover, another point struck him, which has previously worried many millions of primitive men, from the Romans backwards. When Cain developed into maturity, would not his appetite be devastating? Would it not entail universal misery? Already the addition of a baby mouth to the household had increased the trouble of foraging wofully; and it was doing so more and

more every day. The game, both feathered and finny, was far less easy to come at than it had been when first he landed.

So Adam, whose one idea had of late come to be "the morrow," again looked forward, and saw strong indications of famine ahead.

He did not arrive at these two sapient conclusions all in a moment. Each required heavy thought for a slow brain, and it was some months before he had weighed the merits of the case from every point of view which deigned to occur to him.

But at last he brought up at a result, which was, so far as he could see, incontrovertible. Cain was a danger to Society—Society being made up of Eve and himself—and consequently Cain must leave the scene. It grieved him to decide thus, for since the peevish querulous epoch had passed away, the child had

attached itself to him strongly. Little Cain was so lively, so happy, so amusing, that no one could help liking him. Indeed, till he had finally resolved upon sentence, he had never fully realized his liking for him. But actions which are for the bettering of the common weal cannot be biassed by mere notions of sentiment, as any fool of a politician can tell one; so Adam hardened his heart, and explained the whole case to Eve chapter and verse, from the vague beginning to the harsh and bitter end. Cain must—er—be removed; go; leave them for good. Could she suggest a process?

To Adam's elaborate chain of arguments Eve paid but little attention, which was somewhat natural, for they would have puzzled most people; but the conclusion roused her fully.

At first she was startled, though when she saw that Adam was uttering his

gruesome edict in the most matter-of-fact way in the world, and without a trace of savagery, she involuntarily smiled. But her mirth was short-lived. He was sufficiently in earnest to make the thing no laughing matter. He believed firmly in his own theories, and would make no scruples about carrying them out.

So she began to con over the points of his story. Up till then his kingship had never dawned upon her. In fact it struck her still that it was she who had been the actual ruler, for she could always cajole him on any point if she only laid herself out to do it. When her charms were properly used to the full, Adam could never resist them. In the old days, if such a subject had been raised, she would have felt strongly inclined to question his nominal supremacy, not altogether by force perhaps, but certainly by guile. But now, the gentle influence of maternity

had modified her aspirations considerably. If he cared to assume an empty honour which was no good to any one, by all means let him have it. She did not want such a piece of nothingness. She would not rebel. In fact, come to think of it, she would resign anything so long as Cain was not touched; and hap what might, he at any rate should not suffer. But for all that, she intended things to go on exactly as before, if words could make them do it. And so she spoke.

She put it to Adam that she had been an obedient subject, that she owned him as her lord and master, and always must do so.

To which he was graciously pleased to assent.

Then she pointed out, that even if Cain grew to be a man of equal strength with his sovereign, her weight would always tend to influence the scale in

her husband's favour—at the same time slipping a satiny arm round his neck by way of emphasis.

To which Adam once more agreed, never recollecting, simple man, that there was nothing to prevent Eve from going over to the opposition camp, and swaying the balance of power in the other direction if the whim seized her to do so, as well it might.

However, she did not think it necessary to draw his attention to this, but remarking that point the first was dismissed, bade him let the second item of the indictment wait till they saw famine closer at hand. Then they could reconsider the question, and decide more justly upon poor little Cain's fate. But at present there was ten times more food than what was necessary to supply their needs, if they only took the trouble to collect it.

And so all Adam's ponderous structure of thought, which had taken months to build up, was shattered in a few minutes by a woman's illogical arguments.

But his time had not been wasted. His brain had been getting what it so greatly lacked—practice.

THE TENTH CHAPTER SKETCHES
ADAM'S MENTAL GROPINGS.

TILL his physical needs were satisfied, Adam's mind worked but little. But when comforts clustered round him, and he had fish, flesh, fowl, fruit, palm-wine, and Eve, and though rejoicing in their possession was no longer impressed with the novelty of any of them, then he began to wish for other things—things which he could in no wise define, things which he somehow felt must exist, and must be attainable.

His position was that of the clever mechanic, who feels within his power the capability of brilliant invention, but who

cannot think of that one great attainable thing which the world lacks, and which it would mean colossal fortune to invent. Adam felt that if he could define what he sought, then he would be able to fix upon it: but the thing ever evaded him.

The arrival of this phase of effort had been the process of much time. His mind had had to pass in and out of many previous epochs. He had begun by being fully satisfied that the joys and evils of the day were sufficient for that day. Then he had looked forward to the morrow, giving himself some preliminary training with rubbishy pessimistic speculations as to the probable influence of Cain upon the community. And then, after further cogitation about kindred matters, in which he became more *au fait* at this humbler branch of speculation, his mind took a sudden leap. It outstrode

by far all former bounds, and trained itself to pace and rush through measureless tracts where there were no sign-posts of experience or analogy to guide, and which Adam himself was very often fain to believe could exist only in the trembling fabric of his own imagination.

Often and often he would pull himself ruthlessly out of some ecstasy of exploration amongst these dim mazes of the unknown, and telling himself that the affairs of everyday life were the only things worthy of concern, would apply himself to them with a vigour intended to firmly shut out thought of all else. But the fascination of those great spheres beyond his ken, and the mystery of the things they held, was an opinion he had not the strength to resist. His day's work over, his brow would begin involuntarily to knit, and his mind be off and away into this new country before he was

conscious that the journey thither had even so much as commenced.

He could not dream vacantly as of yore, now. He oftentimes wished he could.

Adam seldom spoke to his wife about these new speculations of his. She never understood him if he did. She only yawned, and looked bored, and started off on some irrevlevant topic so soon as his halting speech gave out, and she had a chance to commence talking herself. And as her conversation centred on Cain and his mother, and verged to nothing beyond, except to what regarded purely material comforts, Adam did not find in it what he wanted.

He and Eve seemed by the irony of fate to be polar opposites in many points of character. If they formed ideas on any particular point, they were certain to be diverging ideas, and although con-

venience forced them to have many sympathies and tastes in common, one or other had always to make some sacrifice to bring this to pass.

In fact Eve might be tersely described as sensuous, practical, pleasure-loving, and much wrapped up in Cain. Adam, on the other hand, was developing into somewhat of a visionary, and material things had ceased to occupy the first place in his mind.

As an instance:—

When Cain was some five years of age, Eve appeared one day attired in a garment woven from coarse palm-tree fibre. Being the first thing of that description he had ever seen, Adam put a very natural “Wherefore?” Eve shrugged her sleek shoulders, said that she felt the cold, and added that she considered a petticoat becoming. Adam stared, didn’t understand—for the weather was blazing, and

the garment most hideous—and remained *in puris naturalibus*.

And again:—

He stood one day gazing at the beauties of the tropical sunset, lost in thought. She called him to look how the dying rays were gilding Cain's golden hair with fresh gold. He did so, a trifle impatiently, and turned away again. A minute after she bade him see how the reflected pink from the afterglow above was dying her own limbs, and would insist upon him saying that he admired the effect, and then upon hearing whether he liked her to wear hibiscus flowers as a necklace when the orange trees were out of bloom. By which time of course his most serious cogitations were swept away, as Eve intended they should be. She hated him to be like that. She liked liveliness, caresses, adulation.

And so Adam pursued his vague and

vain imaginings absolutely without human aid. He was obliged to work entirely for his own hand. Whenever he was at fault, he had to try back by himself till he blundered upon the scent again ; and whenever he did get hold of anything that seemed even in the smallest degree tangible, he had only himself to judge of its reality and value. There was no one to whom he could submit it for intelligent criticism. For such matters Eve's head was far worse than vacuous.

But still this evasive something, which his unformed intellect could not lay hold upon, fascinated him too deeply for any thought of desisting from the chase. The thing flitted about before him, ill-formed, undefined, always just beyond his grasp, but ever at his fingers' ends. Indeed, it might always evade him. Yet he knew that it existed : and every day he felt more and more that

his life was gapingly incomplete without it.

The longing for this thing haunted him; waking or sleeping, it rode him like a nightmare. There were vivid suggestions of it everywhere, and go where he liked, he could not escape them even if he would. Nature was around him, under him, over him; and of late Nature's deeper voices had spoken to him and were pregnant with meaning.

To Eve the tropical garden which formed their Eden was a thing of beauty and pleasure, and it was little more. She liked to be stroked by the sun; she loved to be caressed by the soft trade-wind. The aromatic hot-house air was delicious to her nostrils. Nature's music ringing its one sweet monotonous note from birds, and trees, and surf was a joy to her ears. Nature's paintings and carvings, in flowers and foliage and gorgeous butterflies, were

all appreciated to their full. They imbued her with a sense of restful pleasure. She derived happiness from them ; nothing but happiness ; and she pitied Adam in a genial slothful sort of way for not doing the same. There was plenty for both.

She felt that she would enjoy her happy life even more if he would live it too—after her fashion. But of late Adam had become so perverse. He was always moody and thoughtful, always pondering over some stupid rubbish which could produce neither meat, drink, nor any other pleasure. He had tried to explain his quest to her half a dozen times, but she had neither understood nor attempted to understand. She was very contented as she was, she told him, and he would do well to imitate her example. But no, he would persist in his brooding ways.

In her eyes he grew queerer as the days went on. Once when she had strewn

the floor of their new abode with heavily scented fern, plucked with her own hand, bruised to bring out its delicious aroma with her own slender fingers, he had said it made the air sensuous and enervating, and went out and slept in the open, leaving her to enjoy the rich odours by herself. Indeed all her luxuries seemed to pall on his palate now. His taste for palm-wine had almost entirely vanished. He no longer conceived the great thirst which used to bless him when she added her famous brew to their feast. He drank sparingly now, never his share, even though the liquor lay two hand-breadths deep in its pearl-lined bowl—drank to quench a moderate thirst; never as he used to drink. If it had only been himself to consider, it would not have mattered so much; but his new-fangled abstemiousness recoiled upon her, and therein lay the selfishness of it. It was but poor

sport to make merry alone, and after a time or two's trial she gave it up in disgust. And when, in hopes of making a fresh boon companion, she gave Cain drink, Adam must needs play dog-in-the-manger, and sternly forbid her to do it again. Truly he had become very strange. And she sighed most heartily for the old times to come again.

But Adam, though fully conscious of the feelings of his spouse upon these matters, did not allow them to sway him from his purpose in the very least. They caused him a grim amusement at times, and a trifle of contempt; but he was careful to show neither one nor the other. To do so would have caused offence, and he disliked family jars. Besides, he was too wrapped up in his own affairs to give more than a passing attention to his partner's frivolities. He was an enthusiast, you see, and these new

thoughts of his brooked no rival. He pursued them with scarce a halt through the hours of daylight, working or resting; and at night they held him entranced, whether he mused wakingly, or whether he lapsed into dreamland.

Indeed, the concentration of his mind on this all-absorbing subject amounted almost to monomania. Quite, Eve would have said.

But, like an *ignis fatuus*, the thing he hunted after, though always magnetic, was ever elusive; and till final success put a crown on his efforts, only one attempt did he make to force his abstract thinkings into anything approaching concrete shape.

It was the result of chance, as many ideas, brilliant or quasi-brilliant, are wont to be. He had come to land after a hard spell of fishing, and was resting on the foreshore, idly drumming his fingers

upon the white coral clay. Happening to glance down, he saw the pittings he had formed, and was forthwith struck with a notion. Its form was still vague, and he could not yet define it to himself; but he scooped out a plastic lump of the clay and began kneading it gently between his hands.

By degrees the thing assumed shape, and as the scheme grew in him, so did Adam's workmanship increase in decision, and the clay model in symmetry. At last, having finished all he could do, he stood the thing up against a stone, and gazed at it attentively. It was a rude, a very rude, figure of himself.

The replica seemed to give him satisfaction for a time, and his face brightened. But the contented look did not last. His brow puckered again, and his lips closed themselves tightly together. He had not got the thing he wanted.

And yet it seemed to him that he was upon the right track.

He pondered over the matter for a week, and then made another image, spending much more time and labour over it. This new piece of sculpture had a certain similarity to the last, but differed in that it had various points exaggerated, distorted—if you will, idealized.

The idea was plain. He had made god in his own image. His own image, mind; not Eve's.

He looked at his production continually for the next week, giving it a touch here and an accentuation there, and feeling inordinately satisfied with his work, and withal not a little proud of conceiving such a thing.

At the end of that time he carried it cautiously up to the glade, choosing a time when Eve was away with Cain, hunting. He set vigorously to work;

and as their absence happened to be unusually prolonged, they beheld on their return the image installed in a little temple specially built for its reception, and Adam squatted before the portal, regarding it attentively. Both the newcomers stared in simple wonder. Adam, worked up by the occasion, rose to his feet, and burst into one of his rare flights of oratory, explaining many things which he himself did not understand, and throwing out vague hints and innuendoes in lavish profusion, after the accustomed manner of speakers who know little or nothing about their subject.

But vagueness served its purpose better than lucidity would have done. The proceedings impressed Eve mightily, the more so as she did not understand one sentence in ten of what Adam was saying ; and at the conclusion of his exhortation, she turned from him to the grotesque little

image, and bowed her head to it reverently. She accepted all without demur. Adam's god should be her god; and, in view of a greater share of the benefits which she hoped would now accrue to the community, she resolved to surpass him in the diligence of her worship.

Adam had had diffidence at first, and so he was pleased with the result. He scarcely thought that Eve had grasped his entire meaning. She did not accept the image as a symbol only: it was to her, God in all entirety: but at that he would not cavil for the present. Time enough afterwards for the finer distinctions. For the present he was satisfied with her acceptance of his theology—and, it must be added, not a little tickled in his vanity.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER DETAILS
A DISTINCT REVELATION IN THEOLOGY.

EVE's unreasoning acceptance of the new creed had pleased Adam considerably at first; and for a while, when she bowed down before the image, making prayers and supplications for the supply of everything she thought needful, he looked on non-interferent. In fact, for some seven days he himself regarded the grotesque little oddity with more than admiration. But the next week his gaze was tinged with perplexity; which grew, till, at the expiration of a month, the mere sight of the thing was enough to cloud his brow, and make his lips purse up with angry annoyance.

The statue was getting dried and sun-cracked; parts of it threatened to crumble away; and he could not disabuse his mind of the fact that it was nothing but his own work, nothing but his own creation and invention. The thing no longer pleased or fascinated him. The idealized points missed their motive. The whole thing was dead: refused even to suggest life. He saw in it nothing but clay—white, friable coral clay. He could not understand now how it had ever been anything more. The indefinable something which he had associated with it had vanished, danced away, again eluded his mental grasp before he had captured it. In fact he began morbidly to wonder whether this thing he sought ever would have shape, existence, being. It seemed further away than ever.

The presence of the image was a perpetual reminder of the void. So he

destroyed the work of his own hands with the hands that made it, and Eden was once more Atheistic.

Eve was away hunting when this piece of iconoclasm took place; and on her return she was at first inclined to show violent anger. There was Adam squatted amongst the ruins of the fane, with no trace of the image left, save for a fine white dust on the short turf around. Their religion was blotted out. The idea was awful to contemplate.

Eve's devotional exercises had of late formed a pleasant break to the monotony of the day, and so she had been most scrupulous in her attention to them. She called it exhibiting religious zeal. And now she must go back to the old phase of godlessness again, for naturally she could not offer up prayers without a

visible object to aim them at. She had been robbed of a precious jewel, and she lifted her voice on high in weeping and lamentation, Cain, as in duty bound, following suit, though he didn't understand why in the least.

Adam's insight had deepened of late, and he saw how matters lay precisely. He did not interfere, but let his wife's angry grief wear itself out. When the noisy part of it had subsided, he caught her eye, and quietly suggested palm-wine. Eve stared at him. He, who had been so disgustingly abstemious of late, actually proposing this thing himself! She could not have heard aright.

He saw what was in her mind, and smiling rather gloomily, repeated his request. That roused her to herself again. She had a supply of the precious fluid ready brewed; she could get it directly; would he drink deep with her?

Adam said, with a reckless laugh, the deeper the better, and when the punch-bowl came, proved his words. It took many and copious libations to set him going, though he did not stint his draughts; but when he did start, Eve thought she had never seen such wild fierce merriment in her life. He leaped, he shouted, he yelled; he executed mad dances, sometimes with himself, sometimes dragging her round with him; he cursed the old thoughts which had kept him gloomy; he swore that there was no other god but palm-wine. He sang wild songs about nothing; he shouted at Cain that he loved him; he picked up his wife and danced with her again and again; and never missed to drink between each fresh effort. In fact, so mad were some of his revels that Eve was actually a trifle frightened at him once or twice, although she had not spared the

bowl herself, and was in no mood to be scared by trifles. But she enjoyed the orgie intensely for all that. Adam was himself again. Indeed he was more than his old self; for in her eyes he had blossomed out after this long spell of eclipse into a star of the greatest magnitude.

Evening and the ebbing of the punch-bowl's contents at last put a period to their carouse, and Eve managed by dint of some effort to get indoors, and creep under her coverlet. Adam lay down where he was, in the open, and proceeded to sleep noisily. She called to him once or twice, but he answered not, and so being herself very drowsy she let him rest on undisturbed. Dear fellow, she thought, he had at least earned the right to doze where he liked. How pleasant those old times had been when they hobnobbed over the bowl! And joyous these new ones promised to be if only—

Next morning Adam was off and away down to the sea before she was awake. He returned after a longish absence, bearing fish, and looking surly. Without prelude he demanded palm-wine. She had none, and said so. He said he must be supplied forthwith. She replied tartly enough—for her head throbbed, and there was ill within her—that it would take three days to mature. He groaned, and then told her she lied; that it could be made in two, and he bade her set about the brewing without another minute's delay.

His command was rough, and she disliked commands of any kind; but there was something of that black look in his eye that had been there the day he killed the parrot; so she obeyed him.

Adam passed the two days during which the wine fermented in a state of sombre fury; and was unpleasant to

behold and dangerous to speak with. When asked what ailed him, he would snarl and say "Nothing." The only thing that seemed to give him comfort was tearing branches off the trees, and breaking them up into short lengths.

But when the tide rippled in the mollusk shell again, Adam, after a few deep draughts, was out of mourning and repeating from his very heart that there was no other god save palm-wine.

And so things went on.

When Adam was sober, he thrust himself into torment ; but with liquor inside him he could make merry once more ; wherefore he drank of his Nepenthe whenever the chance was afforded him. In those days the only sensible action he seemed capable of was to restrain Eve in her repeated endeavour to let the child

share in their carousals. She would say that it was unkind—yes, brutal to keep Cain out in the cold. Adam would reply that he didn't care, but not one drop of the cursed drink should the youngster have; and if any one supplied him surreptitiously, and he, Adam, came to know of it, let that some one look out for herself. And on these occasions Eve would set her teeth, and look at Adam curiously from the upper corners of her eyes, and sigh because of her inferior strength. She got very queer-tempered in these days, did Eve, as indeed women mostly do when they take to systematic drunkenness.

How matters would have gone on if they had been left undisturbed cannot be told. The palm trees might have resented the incessant tapping of their sap, and have died off one by one; but as there were a great number of them on

the island, it is to be feared that Adam and Eve would have become very sodden before the supply gave out completely. Any way, unless Adam tried to conquer the blue devils who haunted him in some other way than by drowning them, and unless Eve abstained from soaking every time another soaker sat beside her, it is certain that in time this Eden would have contained a very dissolute population. But as has been said, this cannot be disclosed; for one is not able to describe with any degree of accuracy things which did not actually happen. And the reason was that Nature, who has a supreme disregard as to whether she sets human calculations right or awry, put in her spoke, and changed the course of their wheel of fate completely.

The group of islets which made our Eden formed part of a vast and scattered archipelago; which, men say, merely

marks the mountain-tops of a submerged continent. But their geological pedigree does not concern us now. It is only certain phenomena which the straggling expanse of islands occasionally displays, for which we have present interest—to wit, seismic and volcanic outbursts.

It was one of these, or rather an intermingling of both, which acted as a *deus ex machina* to put matters straight again. Eden itself, being a favoured land, did not form the theatre of activity. Its trees were not uprooted, its soil was not rent with gaping chasms. The great hurly-burly of the elemental forces was taking place at a distance, and it was only secondary effects which passed over the intervening strip of ocean. But these formed themselves into portents awful enough to effect the cure.

Adam and Eve were dining when the forerunners of the change came down

upon them. They had contrived to make their glade as squalid-looking as its natural beauties would permit of, and they were eating in very hoggish fashion.

They had retrograded a good deal since that day when Adam squatted amongst the fresh ruins of the temple.

They were quarrelling, too, over their food, in a perfunctory sort of fashion: which is always a bad sign.

When they had sat down, the sky overhead was fleckless, and burning. Being neither of them particularly hungry—for the previous evening had been a wet one, and appetites had dwindled accordingly—their meal did not occupy them for long; but before they were half way through, the heavens had already begun to be overcast, and the air to lose warmth considerably. When they had finished, it was as cool as night, and almost as dark.

Eve said something about thunderstorms, and went towards the bower with the intention of turning in. She took Cain with her.

Adam was left alone. He noted that all the forest noises were stilled: the birds had gone to roost; the insects had ceased their everlasting hum; and there was no soughing amongst the trees. His head was very muddled, but it was clear enough to see that ordinary thunder was not foreboded. What was coming he did not know—and did not particularly care. But he had the curiosity to wait and see. He had nothing else to do, and it might prevent him from thinking of—of something else.

Thicker and thicker grew the clouds overhead, carried up by the gentle arms of the trade-wind, and deeper and deeper grew the darkness. It was impossible to see across the glade now. It was im-

possible for Adam to make out the bower from where he sat. He could scarcely distinguish his own fingers when held out at arm's length. The gloom was so intense that it seemed to beat down upon him like a heavy breath. It oppressed him. He had never known anything like it before. It caused him to fear.

This and the growing chill made him shiver, so that when Eve called out to him, he was glad enough to go to her, crawling across to the bower on hands and knees, as though he thought he would miss it if walking upright.

Eve's old horror of darkness had descended upon her with tenfold force. If the gloom of night was to be dreaded, how much more terrible was that which shut out the scorching midday sun! All her differences with Adam were forgotten. All the stiffness was taken out of her. She was only a terrified woman now;

and he was a strong man, and her husband.

She clung to Adam with a tightness that hurt him, and pressed her eyelids against his breast, and by doing so in part closed her mind against the impression of fresh horrors. If she had had no Adam to be near and comfort her then, she felt she must have died of sheer fright.

From the moment when Eve's arms gripped around him, Adam made an effort and braced himself together. It was a hard effort, for his nerves had been shaken of late; but he managed it, and soon felt the stronger for having some one to protect. He sat calm and quiet, with head erect and shoulders thrown back, pride unconsciously betraying itself in outward pose. But he uttered no words to cheer Eve. He might be prepared to brave the unknown which this portentous blackness heralded, but it was not because

he under-estimated its danger. And when from time to time she faltered out a question as to what was going to happen, he would reply that he did not know, or, that if they waited they would see. He valued a lie at little, as a general thing ; but now, although his love for his wife had been strongly heated again by the thoughts of their mutual peril, he would not verge from the truth even to afford her a momentary comfort. The solemnity of what was happening imbued him too strongly for that.

The hours passed by in unabated blackness, and Adam knew that night had fallen. He sat still where he was, open-eyed, self-contained, silent. Eve occasionally sobbed, frequently shuddered ; but she seldom spoke, and never let go of him. Cain was clutching his disengaged hand. Adam was the only strong man, and to him they both instinctively came

for shelter, even though he was in the same plight as themselves, and had but little to offer them.

The responsibility kept him calm outwardly, but his brain was in strong activity. Amongst other things he conjured up his old ideas of deity, and wondered what punishments a Supreme Being could put upon subjects who had passed countless insults by countless deeds of omission and commission. And speculations about these things led him on to great depths.

The night wore through, the hour of day passed, and instead of light, there began to fall a fine feathery ash. They did not know it to be ash, for sight was wholly dead to them; but they were aware of an impalpable something in the air which irritated their blind eyes, which clogged their nostrils, which gritted between their teeth, and filled their

mouths with dryness; and they dreaded it the more for fear lest other torments should be attendant in its wake.

The first consequences were quick to follow. Thirst seized upon them all, bitter burning thirst which clamoured for quenching. But for long they endured its tortures in stoical silence. Child-like, Cain was the first to give way. He began to whimper dryly, and at intervals to set up a harsh heching cough. He made no direct complaint, but Adam knew what was wanted, and said he would go out and fetch water. Eve's clasp around him tightened convulsively. She shrieked that she would die if she were left alone. He tried to calm her; said that he was not going more than a few yards, and that water they must have. She replied only with convulsive sobs, and a still more terrified embrace. But Adam was firm in his purpose. He said

that Cain was not so strong as they, and that if the child did not have drink he would die, and owe his death to her. If she chose, they would both go down to the brook together. So she gave a trembling consent, and clutching his arm with one hand, and covering her face with the other, crawled out with him into the still, stifling darkness, and went down to the water. There they drank according to their needs, filled a gourd-bottle for Cain, and returned.

Soon afterwards, from the weariness of their long vigil, they fell asleep, and remained dozing in fitful broken fashion half way through what had once been portioned off as night. Then, when the two weaker ones shuddered into wakefulness again, Adam spoke.

He had pondered over matters deeply, and seemed to have a dim inkling of what had occurred. The sun, he said,

had been hurled headlong from its midday perch, had been drowned when immature, and so no new sun could now be born. They were doomed henceforward to an endless night—perchance as a punishment. But all was not snatched away. Life was left to them still, and they must regain courage to preserve it. In short, they must adapt themselves to the new order of things, and that without further delay. He on his part had determined to set off forthwith, and prosecute his fishing as before.

Eve's terrified sobs broke out anew at the thought, and Cain wailed in sympathy. But Adam was not to be shaken from his purpose. If they feared to stay, they might accompany him; but go he must and would.

So the little band linked themselves together, and set off in the solemn gloom.

There was no gleam of light to guide

them. The fall of ash had ceased, but murky clouds still canopied the heavens, and curtained out all glimpse of star or moon. They groped their way across the clearing, feeling for each step like newly-blinded persons with tremulous outstretched fingers, timidly halting before some imaginary obstacle at every other onward stride. Then they entered the black whispering aisles of the forest, and pressed slowly along towards the shore, down paths once well known but now hideously strange.

It was an awful journey. Dewy spider's webs, stretched across the track, would smite them in the face and fill them with loathing; fern-fronds touched their naked bodies like the filmy fingers of ghosts; and mysterious phantom voices seemed to be talking of them in whispers on every side.

Throughout that fearful passage Eve

was in a half-fainting condition, and but for the support of Adam's strong arms, would have fallen by the way a many times. Cain, too, was almost helpless with terror. But at last they pierced through the edge of the undergrowth, and standing on the sloping coral beach, faced the lagoon whose wavelets they heard but could not see.

In spite of the frantic clinging of the weaker ones, the parting had to be; and leaving them to sink down amongst the fringe of the woods, Adam pressed on through the darkness till he felt the cool waves lapping his feet.

But there, with a great cry of ecstasy, he stopped. Far away in the east before him the purple blackness was fading, and a faint gray glow was stealing upwards from the horizon's edge. Quickly it warmed to yellow and crimson, which lit the sky above. Then there was a sharp

flash of vivid green, and then the disc of the sun began to glow above the plain of water, hot and vast and sulphur-coloured. In a minute it had risen to the full, and was commencing to arc upwards into the heavens. The long-delayed day had returned at last, and in the Sun which made it Adam saw his god and worshipped.

His great problem had revealed itself to him at last.

EPILOGUE.

“DOCTOR !”

“Yes, your highness.”

“That must be the boat.”

“I hear nothing.”

“A sick man’s ears are sharp when he is anxious, as I am. There—don’t tell me for the ninetieth time that I am not to worry myself. I repeat to you, I cannot help it. If you wish to do me a service, go and make the captain hurry down with his news.”

The doctor left the cabin, and ten minutes later ushered in the yacht’s sailing-master, a trifle more bronzed in the face, and a little grayer in the hair,

but otherwise unchanged from what he' was ten years since.

The sailing-master began by anxious inquiries about his master's health, but the Archduke cut them short.

“I am worn-out, captain, and no doctor can give me a cure for that. You need not be afraid of exciting me by anything you say. Your news, be it what it may, is the best tonic I can have at present. Sit down, and start your tale from the beginning.”

The sailing-master took a chair, and commenced relating all that he had seen since he left the yacht a fortnight before in her whale-boat : how he had found Adam's old island deserted : and how from a deep thicket which commanded a certain glade on the other island, he had watched the life of the little community for day after day, and studied its every point. They were very contented and happy, he said,

and had surrounded themselves with many comforts, which he described at length, as also the various points of their daily life, upon which the Archduke interposed questions from time to time. “But,” he summed up, “that sun-worship is the strangest thing of all. They wake and watch it rise every morning and pray to it, he silently, she and the child aloud. Indeed, I could only tell from the expression of his face at what he was engaged, for he stood up quietly in the open, with his hands clasped behind his back, and did not move once the whole time. But she gabbed aloud, and went through an elaborate ritual of ceremony and genuflection that was evidently a stereotyped one, for though it varied slightly every day, the child was always able to copy her exactly. They all seemed very much in earnest over it.”

“Tell me, captain, do you suppose they

merely worship the sun for the creature comforts it bestows, because it warms them and gives them light? Or do you think they have grasped an esoteric meaning beyond the simple ball of fire?"

The sailing-master pondered a minute.

"I think, your highness, that he looks upon it merely as a symbol. I say I think so, for I cannot be sure. But I am positive that to her the sun itself is the beginning and end of her faith."

The Archduke sighed, mused a minute or so, and then saying—

"Ah, well, perhaps it is for the best," continued on another theme. "Do you recollect, captain, what you said about cruelty when we were here ten years ago?"

"Yes, your highness."

The sick man smiled. "It would have been a good bargain for me if I had been able to exchange places with that savage

Adam as I wished. Confess now, after having seen the result, do you not envy his fate yourself?"

The sailing-master considered a minute.

"That Adam, your highness, has furrows on his forehead that tell of trouble. He has been through much that we know nothing of, and so has she, though the marks are not so deeply written. My own lines have not been always cast in easy places. In fact, there seem to be a good many arguments on both sides. I shall have to think it out, your highness, before I could decide whether I envy them or not."

THE END.





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